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6-2015

***Nebraska Bird Review* (June 2015) 83(2), WHOLE ISSUE**

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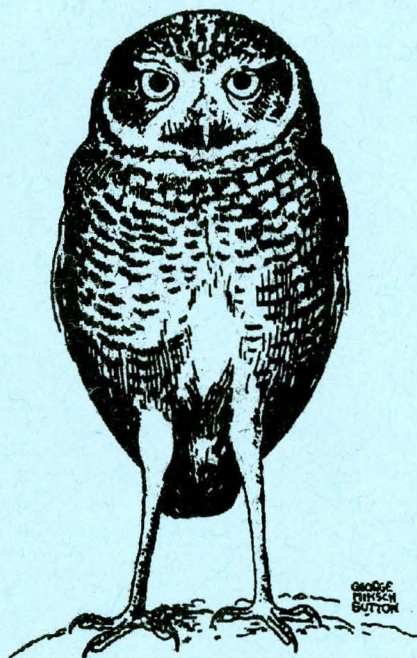
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# ***The Nebraska Bird Review***

A Magazine of Ornithology of the  
Nebraska Region

Volume 83 June 2015 Number 2



Published by the  
Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, Inc.  
Founded 1899

Janis M. Paseka, Editor  
Joseph Gubanyi, Ph. D., Technical Editor

SSSN 0028-1816

## SPRING FIELD REPORT, Mar 2015 to May 2015

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## INTRODUCTION

This was a largely uneventful spring in terms of major events, as most species stayed within their ranges and movement timing parameters. There are always a few stochastic exceptions, but no clear pattern of, for example, early arrival dates was discernible. However, several interesting situations came to light, and there were a few rarities detected. A Couch's Kingbird in Sarpy Co was well-described but awaits a determination by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee as to whether the evidence is strong enough to add this species to the Official State Bird List. Other exciting finds were a wintering Brown Pelican, possibly of the Pacific Coast subspecies, a beautifully-photographed Arctic Tern, a Gyrfalcon, and no less than two Virginia's Warblers. Most of the afore-mentioned "interesting situations" are better-described as candidates for "food for thought", and included the plethora of Glossy Ibis reports, as well as surprising numbers of Thayer's, Lesser Black-backed, Glaucous, and Great Black-backed Gulls. There was a convincing report of a Black Rail; we know almost nothing about this species in Nebraska. Reports of nesting Barn Owls and White-winged Doves are increasing; both species appear to be continuing northward range expansions. Range expansions westward in the south related to maturing riparian and upland second-growth forests are noted for Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, and Summer Tanager. Western hummingbirds are appearing in spring, an unprecedented phenomenon as far as we know in Nebraska; the 3rd and 4th spring Calliopes and 2nd and 3rd spring Broad-taileds were photographed. An interesting situation in population genetics is the recent "outbreak" of sightings of phenotypically pure-looking Eastern Towhees in Scotts Bluff County; some discussion of this is included here under the Eastern Towhee species account.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ad: adult  
BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co  
Cem: Cemetery  
CL: Carter L, Omaha  
CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co  
fem: female  
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co  
FNNWR: Fort Niobrara NWR, Cherry Co  
FRSHP: Fort Robinson SHP, Dawes Co  
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Cedar/Knox Cos  
HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co  
HL: Holmes L, Lincoln, Lancaster Co

ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha and Richardson Cos  
imm: immature  
Jack Sinn: Jack Sinn Memorial WMA, Saunders and Lancaster Cos  
juv: juvenile  
LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co  
LBN: Lakes Babcock & North, Platte Co  
LO: L Ogallala, Keith Co  
LSWNC: Lincoln Saline Wetlands NC, Lancaster Co  
m.ob.: many observers  
NC: Nature Center  
NM: National Monument  
NNF: Nebraska National Forest  
NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee  
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge  
PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co  
PP: Pioneers Park, Lincoln  
PRSP: Platte River SP, Cass Co  
PSP: Ponca SP, Dixon Co  
Res: Reservoir  
RWB: wetland complex in several counties of south-central and southeast Nebraska  
SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co  
SHP: State Historical Park  
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)  
SP: State Park  
VNWR: Valentine NWR, Cherry Co  
WHNC: Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co  
WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln  
WSW: Whitehead Saline Wetland, Lincoln, Lancaster Co

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WF: William Flack, Kearney  
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland  
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** The 16 birds photographed on a barn roof about 15 miles south of Holdrege 6 May (photo fide JGJ) was intriguing in that a group of 19, mostly juvs, was near Holdrege 24 Oct 2009 (TH) and a single was near Holdrege 25 Sep-8 Oct 2012 (JD fide JGJ; KS; Brogie 2013).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Three with Canada Geese in Loup Co 1 Mar (LR, RH) likely wintered there, and 1-6 were in Scotts Bluff Co 14 Mar (RSg, KD) where rare in spring.

**Snow Goose:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Ross's Goose:** A blue phase hybrid Ross's x Snow Goose at Grandpa's Steakhouse Pond, Kearney, 7 Mar (NA) was well described; this is the first report of this form in Nebraska, although there are 6 records of blue-phase Ross's Geese.

**Cackling Goose:** Rare in late spring and early summer, one was in Sarpy Co 25 May (BP) and 3 were at Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo Co, 26 May (CCh, SPf). Best counts were 1600 in Dawson Co and 1560 in Lincoln Co 7 Mar (CG). A report of a very dark bird with a prominent white neck ring at Grandpa's Steakhouse Pond, Kearney, 7 Mar (NA) was of interest; *Branta hutchinsii*, the expected form in Nebraska, occasionally shows a white neck ring (Baldassarre, *Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America*).

**Canada Goose:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Mute Swan:** A resident pair near One Pacific Place, Omaha, had 5 cygnets 13 May 2015; this captive pair has raised cygnets there for several years; 8 were raised

in 2014 but were not seen after mid-Sep (fide BW). This pair may be a significant source for increasingly numerous sightings of Mute Swans in the Omaha area. The only other report was of a near-adult near Kearney 23 Apr that had been present through winter (AF, JGJ).

**Trumpeter Swan:** The last report of the wintering birds at CL was of 2 on 13 Mar (TW); 31 were still there 9 Mar (JR). Scattered statewide reports during Mar were mostly of migrants. Reports of breeding in areas peripheral to the Sandhills continue: the established pair near Ravenna was there as early as 1 Mar, on ice (LR, RH), and were "acting broody" 29 Mar (TEL); a pair on Overton L, Holt Co, 15 Apr was "apparently nesting" (JGJ); and a pair along the Elkhorn River in Antelope Co 9 Apr (SW fide JGJ) apparently was there in 2014 also (fide JGJ) and was not far from a pair (possibly the same pair) nesting on Beaver Creek in extreme northwest Boone Co (fide JGJ).

**Tundra Swan:** The only reports were of the two, an ad and an imm, that wintered at CL; last date was 13 Mar (BSc, JR).

**Wood Duck:** Reports were routine of this fairly common west to common elsewhere spring migrant.

**Gadwall:** An apparent hybrid with Northern Shoveler was at HCR 22 Mar (KS, photo). Pyle (*Identification Guide to North American Birds*) lists a citation to previous reports of this hybrid combination.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** There was one report of this rare spring migrant, mostly occurring in central Nebraska: a male at HCR 1 Apr (KS) was the 33rd spring report in all.

**American Wigeon:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**American Black Duck:** Less than annual in spring, only one was reported, at Columbus 2 Mar (SB).

**Mallard:** Early broods were at Heron Haven, Omaha, 3 May (BP).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Cinnamon Teal:** There were more reports than usual, involving some 20 individuals from central and western Nebraska as expected; easterly, where rare, were singles at HL 2 Apr (RG, m. ob.) and LSWNC 13-26 Apr (MW, m. ob.). An unusual combination was the HL Cinnamon Teal accompanied by a Long-tailed Duck (LE).

**Northern Shoveler:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Northern Pintail:** May reports are not unusual in potential breeding locations away from the Sandhills; 3 at Marsh Duck WMA, York Co, 31 May (MW) and one at Tamora WPA, Seward Co, 12 May (TG) may have been breeders.

**Green-winged Teal:** Spring migration is protracted, with many individuals still in the state into late May; there were at least 10 reports after 15 May (m. ob.) from counties south of the Platte River Valley. Breeding is rare anywhere in Nebraska.

**Canvasback:** A brood of 6 with a female was between mile markers 113 and 114 along Highway 2 in Sheridan Co 21 May (LE); small numbers breed regularly in the western Sandhills.



**Redhead:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Ring-necked Duck:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Greater Scaup:** 1-2 at VNWR 21-24 Mar (CRi) were 3rd-latest in May; there are no Jun reports and only 2 for Jul. Four at Marsh Duck WMA, York Co, 15 May (LE) were rather late also.

**Lesser Scaup:** Reports were routine of this common to abundant statewide spring migrant.

**White-winged Scoter:** Only the 27th spring record was provided by two molting first-year males at Offutt Air Force Base L, Sarpy Co, 26-28 Mar (JR, m. ob.).

**Black Scoter:** A fem in Cedar Co 10 Apr (MB; details provided) was only the 6th documented spring record for the state.

**Long-tailed Duck:** There were two reports of this rare annual spring visitor: one was photographed at HL 2 Apr (SK fide LE), and another was in Cedar Co 10 Apr (MB).

**Bufflehead:** One at VNWR 24 May (CRi) was rather late; last dates for migrants are at the end of May. There is only one breeding record for the state, but there are several records of birds lingering into summer in or near the western Sandhills.

**Common Goldeneye:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** One of 4 fem goldeneyes in Sarpy Co 22 Mar with varying amounts of yellow in their bills included one with "over half the bill yellow", considered a "probable" Barrow's (ARy). Interestingly, of 13 total spring reports for Nebraska, 8 are from the east, suggesting a northern (Minnesota?) rather than western provenance.

**Hooded Merganser:** Reports of this species in late spring should indicate gender. The presence of males in breeding plumage at this time of year is indicative of potential breeding, of interest as this species appears to be expanding its breeding range westward. The vast majority of late spring and early summer reports are of imm birds that have not attained sexual maturity.

**Common Merganser:** Reports were routine of this locally abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Reports were routine for this uncommon eastern and rare western spring migrant.

**Ruddy Duck:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Northern Bobwhite:** There were numerous reports from the Platte River Valley counties southward, as expected, and in the north, there were reports west to Custer Co (TJW, TH), as well as 2 reports from eastern Cherry Co, likely the west edge of the expected northern range: Hackberry L in VNWR 16 May (RSt), and FNNWR 16 May (SQ). None were reported from the west, although the species occurs in the Platte River Valley west to Scotts Bluff Co.

**Gray Partridge:** There was one report of this uncommon northeastern resident: 2 at VNWR on 15 May (EB).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide resident.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** A group of 18 birds on a Loup Co booming ground 12 Apr included one hybrid with Greater Prairie-Chicken (RSt); this hybrid occurs quite often, illustrating the close taxonomic relationship between the two species.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Reports of interest were from opposite ends of the range. In Dakota Co, the best count of 3 leks was 9 birds 14 Mar (BFH), best count at SCP was 3 birds 13 Apr (LE), and in Arthur Co, 2 leks were found 22 Apr (JGJ).

**Wild Turkey:** Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

**Common Loon:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Rather early for the westerly location were 2 at LO 26 Mar (IL); early dates in the Panhandle are 24-30 Mar. Best count was a moderate 39 in Lancaster Co 17 Apr (LE).

**Horned Grebe:** The 46 at BOL 17 Apr (LE) was a good tally; high counts range from 47 to 236.

**Eared Grebe:** Reports were routine of this common west and central, fairly common east, spring migrant.



This Brown Pelican, apparently of the Pacific Coast subspecies based on the reddish proximal gular pouch coloration, wintered at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, 26 Dec 2014 to 13 Mar 2015, here photographed by Ruth Stearns 22 January 2015.

**Western Grebe:** Spring concentrations are lower than those in fall; best count was only 475, at LM 12 Apr (TJW), compared with the high spring counts of 14,100-18,000. Two were at PL 8 May (TG), one lingering until 14 May (LE).

**Clark's Grebe:** Only two were reported, both at the eastern edge of the expected spring range: singles were at Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 17 May (GR, m. ob.) and North Platte 27 May (TJW).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** A maximum of 26 wintered at Sutherland Res, dwindling to 3 on 26 Feb (SJD); a few migrants apparently arrived soon after, as 14 were there 6 Mar (SQ). Rather early were singles in Jefferson Co 11 Mar (CNK) and Lancaster Co 12 Mar (LE); early dates are in late Feb.

**American White Pelican:** One showing a bill knob was rather early at Calamus Res, Loup Co, 3 Mar (PRe). Early dates are in late Feb.

**Brown Pelican:** The bird that wintered at Sutherland Res was last reported 13 Mar (MB) and was not present 28 Mar (TEL). It was considered to be of the Pacific Coast subspecies based on its reddish proximal gular pouch coloration (RSt photo; MB, SJD); there is some evidence for occurrence of Pacific Coast birds on the Gulf Coast (see Bird Forum posts by Mark Bartosik). Pacific Coast birds generally migrate greater distances than those on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

**American Bittern:** One at Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo Co, 31 Mar (AP) was rather early; early dates are 25-26 Mar.

**Least Bittern:** The only reports of this species were of one at Waco WPA, York Co, 21-22 May (DL, GR) and 2 at Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, 27 May (MB).

**Great Blue Heron:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Great Egret:** Generally rare in spring in the west, there were 3 reports: one in North Platte 23 Apr (TJW), one at LO 18 May (JGJ), another there 30 Apr (MW, KH), and 1-2 in Scotts Bluff Co 22-24 May (AK, KD).

**Snowy Egret:** The 5 at BOL 5 May (MW) was a good count; high counts are 5-28.

**Little Blue Heron:** None were reported of this uncommon east and central, rare west, spring migrant.

**Cattle Egret:** Rather early were singles in Dodge Co 9 Apr (MBe) and Sarpy Co 10 Apr (ARa); early dates are 3-7 Apr.

**Green Heron:** Reports were routine of this common southeast, rare northwest, spring migrant.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** None were reported of this rare southeast spring migrant.

**Glossy Ibis:** As stated by Joel Jorgensen: "[It is] remarkable how numerous this species has become in such a short period (first state record was in 1999)." This spring there were 8 reported 3-24 May, from 6 eastern RWB locations, most with White-faced Ibises (JGJ, LE, NR). This number of reports has become the norm in the last few years.

**White-faced Ibis:** The 135 in the eastern RWB 8 May (JGJ) was a good count; high counts are 150-300.

**Turkey Vulture:** The 150 at a roost in Valentine 2 Apr (MSt) was a record high spring count, barely ahead of the 125 at a Lincoln roost 30 Mar (MUs). Previous high count was 95.

**Osprey:** One at Offutt Base L, Sarpy Co, 13 Mar (ARy) was the second-earliest documented record; arrival dates are 19-22 Mar. Nesting attempts continued apace in Scotts Bluff Co, where there were at least two active nests. One was at a regular site on River Road, Scottsbluff, where an ad appeared 18 Apr and incubation was underway 9 May (KD, AK), and the other was at a new site at the junction of Highway 26, Sunflower Oil Road and Spring Creek Road, where nest building was underway 5 May (KD). The nest platform near L Minatare only had minimal nest material 31 May (DTa). As yet, none of the several nesting attempts by Osprey in Nebraska has been successful.

**Mississippi Kite:** Spring migrants occasionally may occur anywhere in the state away from known breeding locations; this spring singles were in southwestern Dixon Co 10 May (JJ) and in Kearney Co 28 May (KS).

**Bald Eagle:** Best count was the 126 at Hersh Ranch, Blaine Co, 7 Mar (BHG); high spring counts are 144-800.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide spring migrant.

**Cooper's Hawk:** Several resident birds were reported; specific breeding activity dates were of one at a nest in Lancaster Co 30 Apr (LE) and another nest-building in Lincoln 20 Mar (RSt). These are typical dates for this species.

**Northern Goshawk:** Identification of this species can be tricky without a good view; 2 reports of possibles were from Omaha 11 Mar and Cherry Co 8 Apr, both within the expected migration period for this rare migrant.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** There was only one report of this rare eastern hawk: one was in Johnson Co 22 Mar (JGJ).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Westerly migrants have been increasingly reported in recent years; singles were at Brady 23 Apr (TJW) and at Dix 30 Apr (JJ). A group of 3 juvs was well-documented by description, photos, and sound recording at FRSHP 20 May (RW), two of which were seen again 25 May (MMc).

**Swainson's Hawk:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Ferruginous Hawk:** Nests were reported in northwest Cherry, southwest Hooker, and northeast Lincoln Cos (JGJ, TJW), all at the eastern edge of the breeding range. An ad and a nestling were in the same Dundy Co nest 17 May that was used in 2014 (JGJ). Last to leave the south-central wintering range was one in Adams Co 28 Mar (TMo).

**Golden Eagle:** Last easterly birds reported were singles in Sherman Co 6 Mar (JGJ) and Brown Co 16 Mar (AMa).

**Black Rail:** Occurrence of this species in Nebraska is enigmatic, with only 2 documented records but several others highly suggestive of this species. Adding to the latter was a convincing sighting at PP 11 May (LE). The observer noted: "A small, plump rail pops out onto the boardwalk before disappearing into the stand of rough leaf dogwood on the east side of the

boardwalk adjacent to the larger marsh to the east. .... The rail was small, all dark underneath and dorsally and had a black stubby bill. The wings in flight were all dark--black on back and gray/black primaries making a bit of contrast between the back and wing feathers. There was no white, rufous, or brown in the wing plumage as in the other rails." Most sightings in Nebraska have been in May-Jun and may represent overshooting migrants; according to current field guides, occurrence in Nebraska is marginal at best.

**Virginia Rail:** One along Highway 26 near Lewellen 28 Mar (DBr) provided the second-earliest spring date for the state, although wintering probably occurs at this site; usual early dates are Apr 9-12.

**Sora:** The 15 a few miles south of Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 16 May (TJW) was second-highest spring count on record; high is 51.

**American Coot:** Reports were routine of this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Sandhill Crane:** One of two veteran observers noted that "they seem to be staging farther east each year", as "lots" were in Hamilton Co 27 Mar (SM), and the other noted that the "hundreds" over Creighton 23 Mar were the "most here in many years" (MB). Farther east, 5 were over Saunders Co 13 Mar (CNK), 15 were there 15 Mar (PH), and one was in Lancaster Co 21 Mar (LE). Migrants had generally moved on by mid-Apr as expected; reports in May can indicate potential breeding. Three at the upper end of Enders Res, Chase Co, 2 May (JGJ) might have been late migrants, but one foraging in a "large area of suitable habitat" in Seward Co 12 May (JG) was a bit more intriguing. Of interest was a report and photo of 8 birds in Lincoln Co 8-9 May, consisting of 4 ads and 4 juvs (VC). According to "Birds of North America Online", "*In Grus canadensis tabida* [the subspecies that breeds in Nebraska], yearlings will remain in pre-breeding flocks during their 2nd summer, but these groups rarely persist during migration or over winter. Yearlings 12-15 month-old do not pair in these summer flocks. Young non-breeders are the most mobile social class and are generally more nomadic and gregarious than adults". Thus this flock may have contained both one- and two-year-old non-breeders, the latter resembling ads. Actual breeding occurred again at Kiowa WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, where a pair with one young was seen 23 May (KD, AK). Breeding occurred near Verdigre, where adults with two small young were captured on a trail camera 20 May (MWi fide JGJ).

**Common Crane:** A Facebook report that a "satellite tagged Common Crane left the Texas Panhandle and arrived on the Platte River in Nebraska on Thursday, March 12, 2015" was incorrect; it is highly unlikely that there are any tagged Common Cranes in North America, and a later correction stated, "One adult COMMON CRANE, from the Texas Panhandle, is NOT QUITE on the Platte River in Nebraska yet, but still in the TEXAS Panhandle" (fide JGJ). Apparently this individual was not sighted in Nebraska this spring.

**Whooping Crane:** Reports were routine of this uncommon central spring migrant.

**Black-necked Stilt:** One to two at Tamora WPA, Seward Co, 18-23 May (KS, m. ob.) were easterly, where rare.



This Sandhill Crane family was photographed by a trail camera operated by Mike Wiebelhaus near Verdigre 20 May 2015. The photo was posted on the Nebraska Fish and Game Association outdoor forum.

**American Avocet:** Reports were routine of this common west and central spring migrant, uncommon east.

**Black-bellied Plover:** Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide spring migrant.

**American Golden-Plover:** Reports were routine of this locally common central and eastern spring migrant, uncommon west.

**Snowy Plover:** None were reported of this rare central spring migrant.

**Semipalmated Plover:** Reports were routine of this locally common central and eastern spring migrant, uncommon west.

**Piping Plover:** Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide spring migrant and local breeder.

**Killdeer:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant and breeder.

**Mountain Plover:** The only reports were from regular sites in Kimball Co 29 Apr-14 May (KH, MW, LBo).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** One at Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo Co, 7 Mar (ABo) was rather early; early dates are Mar 1-3.

- Willet:** Migrants, especially in the east, move through in a narrow time-period; reports there were 21 Apr (6 at BOL; LE) through 9 May in Webster Co (WF).
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.
- Upland Sandpiper:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.
- Whimbrel:** There were 7 reported at 5 locations of this rare migrant. Eastern records are less-than-annual, and so 2 at Tamora WPA, Seward Co, 10 May (KS) were a good sighting. Elsewhere, 2 were at Enders Res, Chase Co, 2 May (JGJ), one was at Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 16 May (m. ob., NOU field trip), and 2 were at LO 18 May (JGJ).
- Long-billed Curlew:** Reports were routine of this fairly common central and western spring migrant, casual east.
- Hudsonian Godwit:** Reports were routine of this fairly common central and eastern spring migrant, casual west.
- Marbled Godwit:** Reports were routine of this fairly common central and western spring migrant, uncommon east.
- Ruddy Turnstone:** Reports were routine of this uncommon central and eastern spring migrant, casual west.
- Stilt Sandpiper:** Reports were routine of this common central spring migrant, uncommon east and west.
- Sanderling:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.
- Dunlin:** Reports were routine of this uncommon eastern and central spring migrant, casual west.
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.
- Least Sandpiper:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** One photographed at LSWNC 25-26 Apr (MW, BP; m. ob.) was rather early; documented early dates are 19-24 Apr.
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** One at Jack Sinn 30 May (MW, details) was the 4th-latest spring record for the state; there are only 4 Jun records. Another was reported in Dodge Co 31 May but no details were published.
- Pectoral Sandpiper:** There were two reports of rather early migrants: one westerly bird was with Killdeer in the central Platte River Valley 16 Mar (AF) and 2 were in Sarpy Co 18 Mar (EB). Early dates are Apr 4-13. Rare in the west in spring, one was in Sheridan Co 21 May (LE); there are only 32 spring records west of Phelps Co.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Reports were routine of this locally abundant statewide spring migrant.
- Western Sandpiper:** None were reported of this rare statewide spring migrant.
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** All of the 13 reports were in May as expected for this uncommon statewide spring migrant.
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.
- Wilson's Snipe:** One at Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, 26-27 May (SSm, MB) may have been a late migrant or possible breeder. Rather early for a presumed non-wintering location was one in Sarpy Co 15 Mar (L&BP). Previous early dates for presumed non-wintering locations were Mar 14-18.

**American Woodcock:** A bit westerly was one in Chapman, Merrick Co, 27 Mar (SM).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Reports were routine of this abundant central and western spring migrant, common east.

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Rare in the east in spring, 1-2 were at WSW 18-21 May (MW photo, TG), possibly the same birds that were at LSWNC 28 May (MW).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Franklin's Gull:** The 20,000+ at LSWNC 22 Apr (MW) was a record spring count for the state. There were 10,000 still present 24 Apr (MW). There is one estimate of "tens of thousands" previously and several mentions in the literature of "thousands", however. Of five such high count estimates, all are in the brief period 15-24 Apr.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Reports were routine of this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**California Gull:** The only report was of an ad in Lincoln Co 4 Mar (TJW); it may have been wintering nearby or an early migrant. Lowest numbers of this species occur in late Feb-early Mar in Nebraska.

**Herring Gull:** Reports were routine of this locally abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Thayer's Gull:** About 20 individuals were reported statewide through 23 Apr (m. ob.), the last an ad at LM (JGJ). The 8 at LM 1 Mar (NA) was a record spring (after 1 Mar) count, and the ad at LM 23 Apr (JGJ) tied the second-latest spring date.

**Iceland Gull:** The only reports were of a very pale individual, probably a pale juvenile, at BOL 1-22 Mar (NA photo, MW photo, m. ob.), and a second-cycle bird there 17-19 Mar (NA, LE). These are the 8th and 9th documented spring records, 29th and 30th for the state overall.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** There were about 12 individuals reported during the period, continuing the increasing number of occurrences of this uncommon statewide spring migrant. Including the 7 early spring migrants cited in the Winter Report, the spring total was an impressive 19 individuals. An ad at LM 18 May (JGJ) provided only the second May record for the state. Last dates are 23-30 Apr.

**Slaty-backed Gull:** A gull photographed at BOL 1 and 17 Mar was thought to be suggestive of a first cycle Slaty-backed Gull (NA). This species has not been confirmed on the Nebraska list, and is very difficult to conclusively separate from similar first cycle gulls such as the "Cook Inlet Gull", a hybrid Glaucous-winged x Herring Gull, which has occurred in Nebraska and eastern Colorado. The photos were submitted to several experts on Slaty-backed Gull identification, and comments received included "looks good but can't totally eliminate Cook Inlet (gwgu X hegu)" (PP), and "would stand out amongst SBG in korea" (NM). Barring DNA testing, it might not be possible to confirm the presence of a first cycle Slaty-backed Gull in Nebraska. A similar bird was at LM 5 Mar (NA), which supports the likelihood that these birds were indeed Cook Inlet Gulls.

**Glaucous Gull:** As with the previous species, good numbers were reported statewide, all but 2 birds in first cycle plumage; in all, 10 individuals were



reported through 20 Apr, the last at LM (JGJ), including the 2 ads at Sherman Res, Sherman Co, 6 Mar (JGJ). The 20 Apr date is 5th-latest on record for spring; last expected dates are 11-13 Apr.

**Great Black-backed Gull:** This species also is occurring more frequently in Nebraska in recent years. Five were reported: a first cycle at LM 26 Feb (see Winter Report) through 5 Mar (SJD, m. ob.), another at Sherman Res, Sherman Co, 1 Mar (MB, DH), a 2nd cycle there 8 Mar (LR, RH), another 2nd cycle at HCR 23 Mar (JGJ), and a first cycle at L Bennington, Douglas Co, 27-29 Mar (JR, SMa, JGJ). These are the 11th-15th spring records; there are now 39 records in all for the state.

**Least Tern:** Reports were routine of this fairly common eastern and central spring migrant, rare west.

**Caspian Tern:** Five at BOL 23 Apr (RSt, EJ) were rather early; there are 3 prior records for 22 Apr.

**Black Tern:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Common Tern:** Only 3 were reported of this uncommon migrant: one at LO 18 May (JGJ), two near North Platte 21 May (TJW), and one in Lincoln 28 May (MW).

**Arctic Tern:** A remarkable record, not only for its rarity, but for the habitat it was using, was of one photographed at Marsh Duck WMA, York Co, 31 May (JGJ) and seen again later the same day (MW). This is the 5th record for Nebraska, 3 in spring, 16 May-11 Jun, and 2 in fall, 20 Sep-1 Oct. (See photo in NBR Vol. 83 No. 1, page 23.)

**Forster's Tern:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Rock Pigeon:** Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

**White-winged Dove:** In several cases, individuals and pairs return each spring to sites they attended in previous years. A rural Dawson Co location has hosted a pair since spring of 2012 (J&JH); another regular site is the Ochsner yard in Ogallala, where a pair was present in 2013 and another was there 30 Apr this year (JO). Intriguingly, 2 hung around the Burger King in North Platte from 12 Apr (GW, JGJ). They had apparently been present at least in 2014 and may have nested this year (TJW). Two nestings were reported: one on the University of Nebraska-Kearney campus beginning 13 Mar and incubating by 18 Mar (RH, LR), and the other at Culbertson, where one arrived 16 Apr and a pair was nesting by 31 May (DA fide JGJ). Finally, there were 2 additional singles reported: 26 Apr in Seward (JG), and 7 May in Lincoln (BWe).

**Mourning Dove:** Good spring counts were 80 at both LO 30 Apr (MW, KH) and in Kimball Co 20 May (CWo). High count is 83.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Reports were routine of this common eastern and central spring migrant, uncommon west.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** The 3 reports were about the norm for recent springs. Singles were at FF 24 May (BP), Grove L WMA, Antelope Co, 26 May (MB), and a "possible" at FF 29 May (JR).

**Barn Owl:** There were a surprising 10 reports, one of an active nest, the others of single birds. The active nest was in a road cut in Chase Co 17 May (JGJ), and the other 9 reports (m. ob.) were statewide beginning 4 Apr in Seward Co (MLa).

- Eastern Screech-Owl:** A nest box in the observer's Dixon Co yard that had hosted breeding screech owls in 2012 had a juv 29 May this spring (JJ). One was occupying a nest box in an Omaha yard by 3 Mar; at least one was in the area into Apr, and activities suggested a breeding attempt (SMa).
- Great Horned Owl:** Earliest nesting reported was 10 Mar in Bellevue (CNK) and 14 Mar in Scotts Bluff Co (RSg). Most incubation begins in mid- to late Feb.
- Snowy Owl:** In addition to the 4 winter reports, one came to light 27 Mar when seen by Roger Pehrson near Laurel and reported by his son John to Ed Brogie; it was first seen in the area by Bill Boese around 13 Mar (fide EBr, MB) and was seen by many through 1 Apr (RP fide SSc). This is the 6th-latest date on record for this species.
- Burrowing Owl:** One at possibly the easternmost regular site, Prairie Dog WPA, Kearney Co, 27 Mar (TMo) was rather early; there are 3 early dates 21 Mar. The 23 at CLNWR 27 Apr (TFu) was an excellent count; previous highs were 19-41.
- Barred Owl:** This species continues to expand its range slowly westward. The Little Blue River drainage has reports as far west as Nuckolls, Clay, and Adams Co, but Barred Owl may only be established in Jefferson and Thayer Cos; 2 were east of Hubbell, Thayer Co, along Rose Creek, a southwestern tributary of the Little Blue River, 23 Mar (JGJ), and singles were at each of 2 Jefferson Co locations 2 Mar (RSt). More recently, records are accumulating in the Republican River Valley; one at Bloomington, Franklin Co, 23 Mar (JGJ) is farthest west to date, fewer than 10 miles from the excellent riparian forests in Harlan Co. One near Dannebrog, Howard Co, 1 Mar (MB, DH) was at the west edge of the range in the Platte River Valley. One was giving the classic "who cooks for you" call at the Valentine City Park, 17 May (RSt), almost 200 miles west of the western edge of the current range, which is in the vicinity of Niobrara.
- Long-eared Owl:** Two reports of breeding were received; egg fragments were found 27 Apr below a nest that was found 4 Apr in Blaine Co (fide TEL), and a nest in Kimball Co that was first seen 12 May fledged 2-3 young 17 May (LS, KD, AK).
- Short-eared Owl:** This species tends to be nomadic in winter rather than migratory; two reports from the southeast were likely of such birds: 6 Mar in Lancaster Co (EMC) and 1 Apr in Douglas Co (JDa). Later reports were from probable breeding locations: 10 Apr in Dawes Co (WM), 27 Apr in Lincoln Co (TJW), 17 and 23 May in Kimball Co (2; KD, LE), and 26 Apr in Sioux Co (2; MMc).
- Northern Saw-whet Owl:** There have been reports for a few years now during winter of this species in the cedar canyons in southeastern Lincoln Co, although the owls have probably always wintered there; this year counts on 6 Mar yielded a total of 6 birds (TJW). Last calls are usually heard in Mar; this year one heard 2 Apr was the "latest I have heard" (LDe). Breeding may occur there but has not been confirmed. One calling in a canyon near Whiteclay, Sheridan Co, 18 Mar (PMH) was wintering or migrating. The grandfather of saw-whet owl breeding in Nebraska, Wayne Mollhoff, reports that 5 of the 6 chicks at the Wildcat Hills, Scotts Bluff Co, nest box were banded 14 May (JT, KD); the 6th chick had fledged. Another group of 5 chicks in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co,

was banded 26 May (WM, JT), and a third breeding location was implied as a biologist photographed 3 fledged young 2 miles south of Chadron SP 18 May (fide WM). Following a 2010 survey by Bart Bly that estimated 48 breeding pairs in the west, Wayne Mollhoff began setting out nest boxes. It is amazing but perhaps not surprising that attention given to a species that had no breeding records in the state until 2014 has yielded such great results!

**Common Nighthawk:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

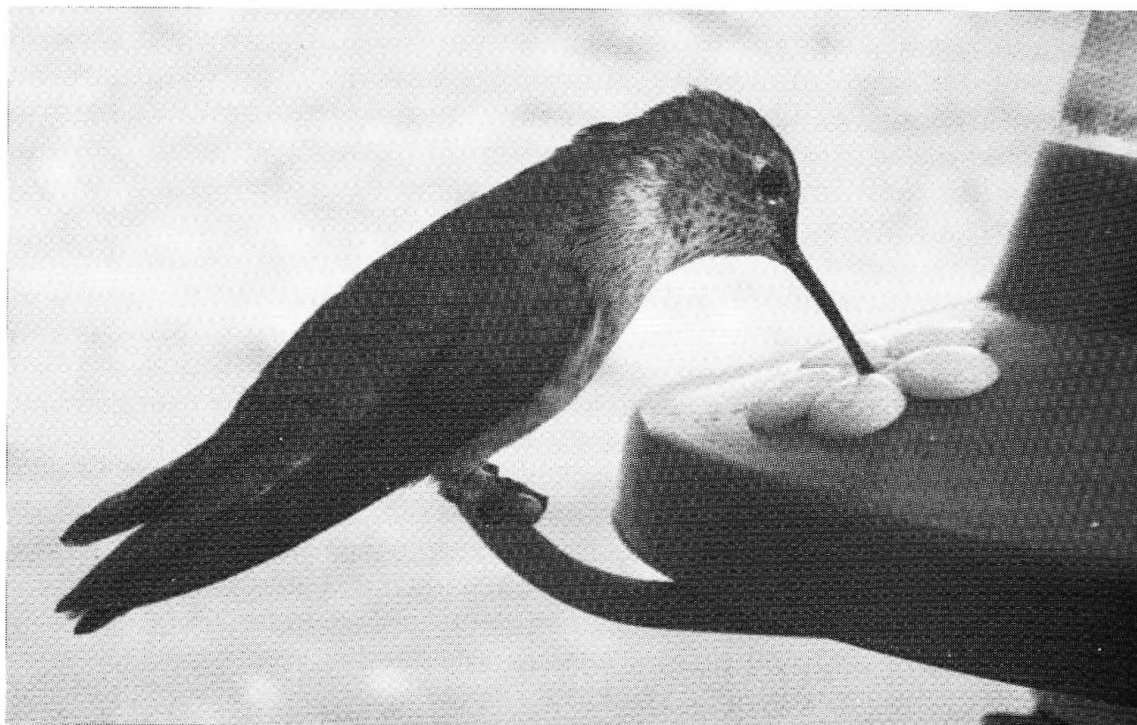
**Common Poorwill:** One in Moran Canyon, Lincoln Co, 29 Apr (LDe) was rather early; early dates are 22-25 Apr. None were reported farther east.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** The only reports were from known locations, although the Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, location hosts only a few birds; one was there 1 May (LE). The 1 May date is rather early; early dates are 23-29 Apr. The other report was from ICSP 18 May (TG), where there is a sizeable population.

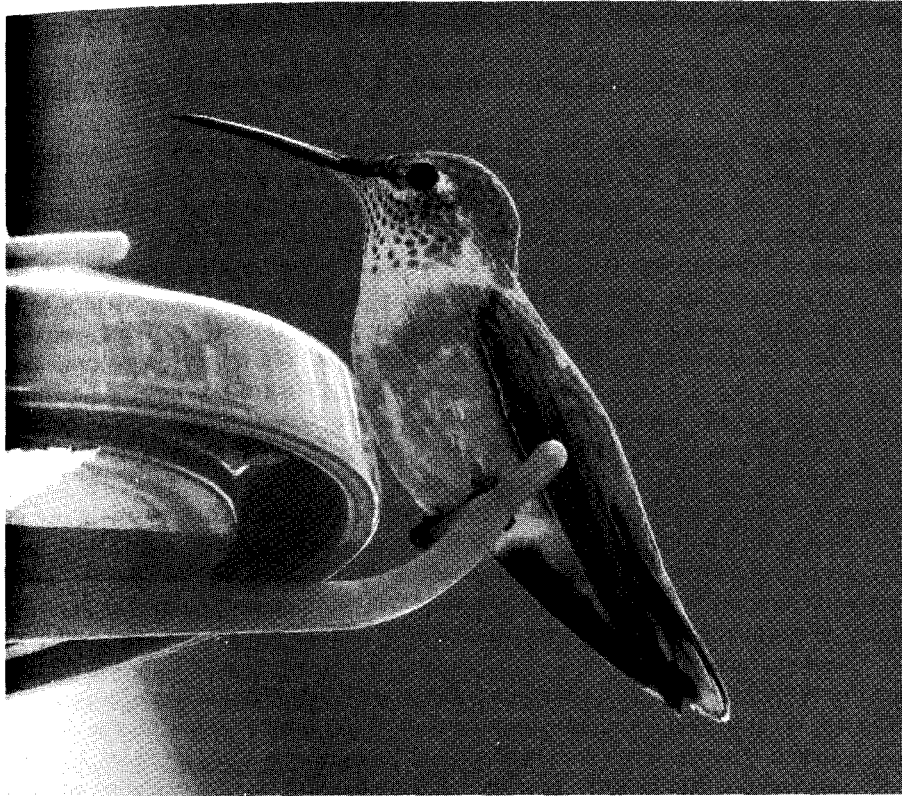
**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** Reports were routine of this common eastern spring migrant.

**Chimney Swift:** The 15 in Custer Co 25 Apr (TH) were rather early; arrival in that part of the state is in mid-Apr. The 40 in Otoe Co 20 May (SQ) was a good spring tally; high is 118.

**White-throated Swift:** Reports were routine of this fairly common western Panhandle spring migrant.



This immature male Calliope Hummingbird, the fourth spring record for Nebraska and first since 1994, was photographed by Juanita Whittecar in eastern Dawes County 25 May 2015.



This female Broad-tailed Hummingbird appeared in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 31 May, photographed by Kathy DeLara. It is the 3rd spring record of this species for Nebraska. The pointed outer primary can be seen clearly.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Westerly reports are increasing; this spring one was at Valentine City Park 17 May (TJW). There are 10 documented records from Valentine and Lincoln Co westward.

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** Only the 2nd and 3rd spring records for the species were fems that appeared in a southeastern Dawes Co yard 25 May (JWh) and a Scotts Bluff Co yard 31 May (KD photo). The southeastern Dawes Co bird was in the same yard that a fem was in last year (JWh).

**Calliope Hummingbird:** Other than Ruby-throated, hummingbirds generally do not occur in Nebraska in spring, but the last few years have seen a small increase in records of Broad-tailed, Calliope, and Black-chinned. Surprisingly, two Calliope Hummingbirds were reported this spring, the 3rd and 4th such records and first since 1994. An ad fem was photographed at Creighton 18 May (CT fide MB), and an apparent imm male was photographed in southeastern Dawes Co 25 May (JWh).

- Belted Kingfisher:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.
- Lewis's Woodpecker:** None were reported of this uncommon western spring migrant.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Two observers noted that this species is not often encountered mid-city; one in an Omaha yard 3 May was only the second there in 30 years (NR), and another in a Lincoln yard was "unusual" (MP). Similar sentiments have been expressed by another Omaha observer (JR).
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** 1-2 returned 1 Mar to a Scotts Bluff Co yard where they were present last year but had been absent for "a couple months" prior to 1 Mar; at least one was in the yard through 22 May (KD). Usually they are not seen during winter in the west; it is not known where they go or how far, although there is evidence that the species vacates northerly parts of its range during severe winters ("Birds of North America Online"). Red-bellied Woodpeckers first appeared in the DeLara yard in 2010 and bred in 2012, the first Panhandle breeding record.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Westerly, where rare in spring, and early was a juv in Dundy Co 1 Mar (MB); the nearby Panhandle has 12 spring records starting 7 Mar. Another westerly single was at McCook 20 Mar (JGJ).
- Downy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.
- Hairy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine of this common eastern, less common western, resident.
- Northern Flicker:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** Reports continue from the southwest edge of the slowly-expanding range: 2 were at Flathead WMA, Jefferson Co, 1 May (JGJ). The many additional reports were scattered along the Missouri River Valley north to Washington Co, and westward near the Kansas border, the Nebraska range now occupied by this species (m. ob.). Evidence suggests that FF may hold 3 pairs; Rick Schmid suggested 3 areas of FF where most sightings occur, and these likely correspond to three territories: Hidden L, Missouri/Walking Club trails, and Riverview Boardwalk.
- American Kestrel:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.
- Merlin:** Reports were routine of this uncommon western and central spring migrant, rare east.
- Peregrine Falcon:** One over southwest Dixon Co 25 Mar (JJ) was rather early; early dates are 22-24 Mar. One at LM 19 May (JGJ) was rather late; late dates are 24-27 May. There were numerous reports from the Omaha and Lincoln areas, where resident birds probably account for most sightings.
- Prairie Falcon:** Reports were routine of this fairly common regular winter visitor, spring migrant and summer resident west, and rare winter visitor east.
- Gyr Falcon:** Of less than annual occurrence in the state, there was one report this season: one in Boyd Co 3 Apr (MB, DH). This is the first record for Apr; last dates for wintering birds are 3 Mar (twice), and there is a single May record.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Rather early was one at BOL 2 May (MW), and another at FF 3 May (DL, BFH, BP, BSt); early dates are 29 Apr-2 May. This species is a rare spring migrant in the Panhandle; one was in Dawes Co 17 May (SM). Westerly were 2 at Smith Falls SP, Cherry Co, 31 May (CRi).



- Western Wood-Pewee:** This species summers regularly in small numbers east to the Valentine area, but a calling bird was unexpected as far east as Grove L Hatchery, Antelope Co, 23 May (GSm). It is only the third spring report for the east, although the two prior are undocumented.
- Eastern Wood-Pewee:** There are a few scattered westerly records to Keith, Lincoln, and Custer Cos, but this spring there was a surprising number reported: one was in Lincoln Co 27 May (TJW), singles were at Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 16 May (TJW), in FNNWR the same day (GR, BP), and one was at Smith Falls SP, Cherry Co, 31 May (CRi).
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** There were 2 well-documented reports: singles were at Towl Park, Omaha, 16 May (JR) and Walnut Grove Park, Omaha, 22-23 May (SMa, MW).
- Acadian Flycatcher:** The two strongholds for this species are ICSP, where best count was 7 on 15 May (SSc), and FF, where 4 were found 30 May (JR). The only report away from these locations was of one at SCP 18 May (JSS).
- Alder Flycatcher:** This species migrates through east and central Nebraska; westernmost were singles at VNWR 16 May (BP, SQ, GR) and FNNWR 24 May (CRi).
- Willow Flycatcher:** One at SCP 4 May (JSS) was rather early; early dates in the east are May 2 (three times).
- Least Flycatcher:** The 28 in Johnson Co 9 May (JGJ) looks like a good tally, but high counts are 50-54.
- Cordilleran Flycatcher:** The 4 reports were from Scotts Bluff and Sioux Cos, none at known breeding locations, 13-31 May (AK, EJo, KD). Migrants are rarely reported; these are the 21st-24th reports.
- Eastern Phoebe:** One at Parks, Dundy Co, 20 Mar (JGJ) was rather early that far west. The 11 counted at PL 30 Mar (TG) was a good count; highs are 36-50.
- Say's Phoebe:** Reports were routine of this common spring migrant west, uncommon central.
- Great Crested Flycatcher:** Reports were routine of this common spring migrant east and central, uncommon west.
- Couch's Kingbird:** A major surprise was a single bird at FF 9 May that was identified by plumage and calls as this species (GR, BP, JR). If accepted by the NOURC, this would be Nebraska's first record of this species.
- Cassin's Kingbird:** Reports were routine of this common western spring migrant.
- Western Kingbird:** One in Dawes Co 21 Apr (JGJ) was the earliest documented record.
- Eastern Kingbird:** One at HCR 25 Mar (SQ, details) was only the 4th record for Mar, all 24-31 Mar.
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** This species now occurs each year in southern Nebraska; this spring there were 3 reported: singles in Thayer and Webster Cos 1 May (JGJ), and in western Douglas Co 9 May (fide JGJ).
- Loggerhead Shrike:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant and summer resident.
- Northern Shrike:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide winter visitor and spring migrant.

**Bell's Vireo:** One at FRSHP 20 May (RW) was rather early; early dates in the west are 11-19 May.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Westerly were two apparently different singing birds at NNF, Halsey, 17 May (GR, BP). Reports away from the east are rare.

**Plumbeous Vireo:** Only 2 were reported of this uncommon Panhandle spring migrant: one was at Chadron SP 15 May (KF) and the other was in Scotts Bluff Co 18 May (AD).

**Cassin's Vireo:** One at LO 24 May (LE) was only the third spring record for Nebraska; all 3 are during the last week of May.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** Reports were routine of this uncommon eastern spring migrant.

**Warbling Vireo:** Arrival was rather early. In the east, first reported were 3 at BOL 23 Apr (RSt); early dates in the east are 14-18 Apr. In the west, however, early dates are 1-2 May, but this spring there were 3 earlier arrivals: 26 Apr Ogallala (TFu), the same day at Clear Creek Marshes, Keith Co, (TFu), and 27 Apr at CLNWR (TFu).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** Only the 10th record away from the east was one at NNF, Halsey, 17 May (GR, BP).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Reports were routine of this common eastern and central spring migrant, uncommon west.

**Pinyon Jay:** None were reported of this fairly common western spring visitor.

**Blue Jay:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant and resident.

**Black-billed Magpie:** The spring reports were from similar locations to those listed in the Winter Report, although observer comments were generally pessimistic. In Scotts Bluff Co, despite reports from several locations, including 9 birds at L Minatare 14 Mar (RSg), they were said to be "pretty scarce again" (AK), and a western Nebraska trip in mid-Apr yielded "more active Ferruginous Hawk nests than magpies" (JGJ). Sightings in the southwest were encouraging, with 4 sightings of 6 birds in Franklin and Hitchcock Cos 1 May (JGJ). LM numbers were low, only 2 sightings totaling 3 birds were reported (JGJ, LE). FRSHP continues to host a few birds; 7 were there 20 May (RW), and one was at NNF, McKelvie, 28 May (EJo). Away from these locations, magpies are scarce and localized, especially east of the area bounded roughly by Webster, Boone, and Thurston Cos; thus the 2 in Colfax Co 26 Apr (D&JP) were a good find, and there is still a small group near Norfolk (see Winter Report).

**American Crow:** Good counts of 405 on 11 Mar and 328 the next day in Lincoln Co (TJW) indicate peak spring migration; high counts are 480-2490, all in the period 6-23 Mar.

**Horned Lark:** Reports were routine of this abundant statewide spring migrant and common summer resident.

**Purple Martin:** Valentine and VNWR appear to be the westernmost sites for this species in the north, but numbers must be low; only the 3rd and 4th reports from there were of 1-3 at VNWR 9-18 May (CRi) and one at Valentine City Park 16 May (SQ). Up to 15 were at Benkelman 29 Apr-15 May (DM, MW, KH), where the species has been established for a few years, and at Broken Bow, where 2 were seen 26 Apr (LE).

**Tree Swallow:** One at PP 20 Mar (LPI) was rather early; early dates are Mar 14-15.

**Violet-green Swallow:** An exciting find for many NOU members were easterly birds at Valentine Fish Hatchery 16-17 May (TJW, DL, RW, m. ob.); another was at FNNWR 19 May (RW). There is a prior report for Valentine 3 Jun 2013, but no records of the species farther east than FNNWR.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Rather early were singles at PL 1 Apr (LE) and Shoemaker Marsh, Lincoln, 2 Apr (LE). Early dates were 30 Mar-2 Apr.

**Bank Swallow:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Cliff Swallow:** One at Jack Sinn 8 Apr (AG) was rather early; early dates are Apr 4-6. The 1800 estimated at LO 30 Apr (MW, KH) was an excellent tally; high spring counts are 2000-3500.

**Barn Swallow:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Black-capped Chickadee:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide resident.

**Mountain Chickadee:** One that appeared in the DeLara yard 8 Feb was still present 22 Mar (KD); the only other report was of one in a south Scotts Bluff Co yard 18 Apr (AK). This species has appeared in small numbers for the last few years, but only in Scotts Bluff Co, suggesting movement down the North Platte River Valley from Wyoming.

**Tufted Titmouse:** This species has a surprisingly restricted range in Nebraska and has shown little propensity for expansion away from mature forest in Missouri River counties plus Johnson and Pawnee Cos, except possibly for a few scattered reports in Gage and Jefferson Cos in recent years. Even in Lancaster Co, the species struggles to be reported annually (LE, MW).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Numbers were generally average or below-average statewide, with best single-location count 5 at a Douglas Co spot (TFi). Departure times from winter locations were, as expected, during May.

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** Reports were routine of this common northwestern, central, and eastern resident, uncommon winter visitor elsewhere.

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** Reports were routine of this fairly common northwestern resident.

**Brown Creeper:** One along Highway 97 near the Snake River, Cherry Co, 16 May (TJW) may have been at a breeding site; there is a Jun report from nearby Snake River Campground. Reports 23 Apr from Neale Woods, Douglas Co, (JR) and FF (EA) may have been of rather late winter visitors, or possibly breeders. Last dates are 27 Apr-May 2 at non-breeding locations. Breeding does occur at FF, but not as yet at Neale Woods.

**Rock Wren:** Reports were routine of this common westerly spring migrant.

**House Wren:** One at Bellevue 5 Apr (AG, BG) was rather early; there are only 4 earlier dates in Apr and no documented records for Mar.

**Winter Wren:** A single bird in Dundy Co 14 Mar immediately raised the geographic possibility of Pacific Wren; however, the observer made a video recording of the bird including vocalizations, and it proved to be a Winter Wren (MB).

**Sedge Wren:** Reports were routine of this common eastern spring migrant; there are no documented records in the north-central and west.

**Marsh Wren:** One in Dundy Co singing the expected western-type song for that location (WF) probably wintered nearby, as the date is about a month earlier than usual early dates for migrants.



- Carolina Wren:** The majority of reports were, as expected, confined within southeast Nebraska from Cuming Co (25 Apr, LR, RH) to Jefferson Co (9 Mar, MUs; 11 Mar, CNK), but the usual outliers popped up: one was at HCR 25 Mar (SQ), where there is a persistent small population, and, most surprising, one was at Norden Bridge, Brown Co, 16 Mar (AMa). There are about 4 prior records from north-central Nebraska. One was on a nest with 4 eggs at Homestead NM, Gage Co, 1 May (JBo).
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** This species occurs in good numbers in most of the state except for the Sandhills; it is still rare in the north-central, but numbers are increasing along the Niobrara River west to Highway 16F. This spring there were 4 reports of 1-2 birds 15-31 May (TJW, WF, CRi).
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Wintering is rare but does occur in the southeast; one that showed up in a Fremont yard 14 Feb remained until 6 Mar (GR), and another was in Omaha 4 Mar (DP). Early dates for migrants are 9-11 Mar.
- Eastern Bluebird:** One singing at Wildcat Hills SRA, Scotts Bluff Co, 7 Mar (KD), where it summers, is the earliest record for the Panhandle, with others 8, 11, 16, and 18 Mar and expected early dates 23-25 Mar. There are no Feb records for the Panhandle.
- Mountain Bluebird:** The 50 in Kimball Co just east of Pine Bluffs WY, 12 Mar (DHa) was a good count; high counts are 65-100. Defining the east edge of the spring migration range were one in Frontier Co 15 Mar (JMi), 15 in Dawson Co 15 Mar (D&JP), and 7 on a frozen pond in Custer Co 1 Mar (WF). Migrants arrive on the breeding range in late Feb.
- Townsend's Solitaire:** There were only 3 reports, far fewer than usual, and all of singles in the west: Kimball Co 19 Apr (WF), southern Garden Co 12 Mar (D&JP), and Scotts Bluff Co 14 Mar (KD, RSg).
- Veery:** This species is a rare spring migrant in the east and west, likely involving different subspecies, but there has been only one report from central Nebraska. This spring, there were a surprising 5 reports from northeast Cherry Co 18-31 May involving 8 individuals identified by song (CRi). The only other report for the season was of a singing single at PRSP 12 May (RSt).
- Gray-cheeked Thrush:** This was an amazing year for this species; as one veteran observer stated: "I've seen more Gray-cheeked Thrushes this spring than any other I can remember" (JGJ). A total of some 26 individuals were reported 2-21 May, west to Hamilton Co, where one was seen 14 May (JGJ).
- Swainson's Thrush:** First arrivals were about a week earlier in the west, whereas data to date have shown the opposite. Rather early were 7 at Oliver Res, Kimball Co, 23 Apr (LE) and one in Scotts Bluff Co 28 Apr (AD). Previous early dates in the north and west were 24-27 May. First reported in the east were 5 in Lancaster Co 2 May (RSt), although 10 were at HCR in the central 1 May (JGJ). Best counts were the 25-30 in FF 9 May (BP), and, in the west, 20+ at FRSH 20 May (RW).
- Hermit Thrush:** There were 2 reports of early arrivers in the east: Otoe Co 22 Mar (JGJ) and Dodge Co 30 Mar (GR), where previous early dates were 26-29 Mar. This species is rare in the west, so westerly and rather early were one at Ash

Hollow SHP, Garden Co, 27 Mar (JGJ) and another in Dundy Co 29 Apr (KH). Previous early dates away from the east were 26-30 Mar.

**Wood Thrush:** Reports were routine of this uncommon eastern spring migrant.

**American Robin:** Reports were routine of this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Gray Catbird:** Reports were routine of this common eastern spring migrant, uncommon west.

**Brown Thrasher:** One in Scotts Bluff Co 24 Apr (AD) was rather early; early dates in the west are 19-24 Apr.

**Northern Mockingbird:** One in Pawnee Co 14 Mar (CNK) was rather early; early dates are 8-9 Mar.

**European Starling:** Reports were routine of this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**American Pipit:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Sprague's Pipit:** The only report was of one rather late at FNNWR 16 May (PH, CNK, m. ob.); late dates are 18-23 May.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Migrant numbers peak in mid-Apr; 1575 were in Snell Canyon, Lincoln Co, 8 Apr (TJW), and "huge flocks" were in Hall Co 16 Apr (CNK).

**Lapland Longspur:** Reports were routine of this abundant statewide spring migrant.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur:** Five in Keya Paha Co 17 May (DH, KGo) were near the eastern edge of the Nebraska breeding range.

**McCown's Longspur:** Reports were routine of this fairly common western spring migrant.

**Snow Bunting:** The only report of this early-departing winter visitor was of a rather late bird in Brown Co 16 Mar (AMa); there are only 3 later spring dates, through 23 Mar.

**Ovenbird:** One at ICSP 27 Apr (SSc, JC, WRS) was rather early; early dates are 22-24 Apr.

**Worm-eating Warbler:** One in Lancaster Co 16 Apr (LPI) was the first in the state for several years. It was also rather early; early dates of the 50 or so total records for the state are 19-28 Apr.

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** Numbers of this species continue to increase in favored locations such as ICSP, PRSP, and FF. Careful studies at PRSP and ICSP are delineating territories: 5, including a photographed nest, at ICSP along rocky streams in the southern part of the park (SSc, JC, WRS), and 4 at PRSP along Stone Creek (SSc, JC). At ICSP, first sighting was 21 Apr, a nest was active 15 May, a juv was photographed 28 May, and 2 more juvs were seen 29 May (SSc, JC, WRS). At PRSP, first arrival was 4 Apr, 3 territories were established 3 May, and a 4th territory by 21 May (SSc, JC). There were numerous reports from FF from 6 apparently separate locations; evidence of nesting was seen 20 May in Mormon Hollow with an ad carrying food (RS), and multiple sightings in Handsome Hollow through 9 May suggest nesting there also (m. ob). Additional sightings at FF included 1-2 each in Mill Hollow (7 Apr; NR), Childs Hollow (20 May; SMA), at Gifford Rd at the railroad tracks (11 and 16 Apr; RS, ARy), and at the junction of Stream and Cottonwood Trails (5 May; RSt). Recent years have shown a few sightings westward; this spring one was at Homestead NM, Gage Co, 11 and 13 May (KF); the veteran observer had not found this species in that county previously. There are only 3 reports for spring and summer west of Gage Co. Nesting likely occurs at

Schramm SP, Cass Co, where one was present 9 May (D&JP), along Rock Creek in Neale Woods, Douglas Co, where one was found 16 Apr (NR), and at PSP, where one was seen 25 Apr (JGJ) and it or another was "on territory" 3 May (BFH). Two along a wooded creek on Bay Hills Golf Course, Cass Co, 30 Apr (KSc) were likely nesting given the date. The remaining sightings appear to have been of migrants or wandering birds: one at Armbrust Lane, southwest Sarpy Co, 9 May (D&JP), one at WP 6 May (RSt), and one in southeast Butler Co 28 Apr (MW, KH).

**Northern Waterthrush:** Rather early were singles at FF 20 Apr (JCr) and in Cass Co 24 Apr (KSc), and 2 were at FF 24 Apr (EB). Previous early dates were 20-23 Apr.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** About 10 individuals were reported 3-22 May, all in the east as expected (m. ob.). This is a good tally for this rare spring migrant; it has been reported in higher numbers in recent years. One at PRSP 3 May (DL, SSc) was rather early; previous early dates were 2-4 May.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** This species is less-than-annual in spring in Nebraska, with most reports from the east. This spring a good showing of 4 was reported, all singles: in Bellevue 3 May (CNK), in Lincoln 3 May (MVD), somewhat westerly in Hastings 5 May (PSa, details), and in FF 12 May (KGo, details).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** All but 2 of the reports were from FF, where nesting has occurred in nest boxes at Great Marsh the last few years; one was carrying nest material there 5 May (MCS). Arrival was 1 May (LE) and best count 3 on 23 May (JR, MW). The only reports away from FF were the observer's 100th yard bird in Bellevue 6 May (RBa) and one unexpected at WP 7 May (EJ). Reports away from the Missouri River Valley are few.

**Tennessee Warbler:** This spring added 2 reports to the previous 43 from the Panhandle: one was at FRSH 20 May (RW) and 3 were in Sheridan Co 24 May (NV). There were several reports from the Valentine area during the NOU Spring Meeting 15-17 May (m. ob.).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Nashville Warbler:** This species is rare westerly. Perhaps unsurprising given the dense coverage by NOU members, 2 were found in Cherry Co 16 May: singles at FNNWR (BW) and Valentine City Park (BW).

**Virginia's Warbler:** There were 2 reported, only the 6th and 7th for spring, 12th and 13th overall. Singles were in Dundy Co 2 May (JGJ) and at Oliver Res, Kimball Co, 17 May (PD). Five of the spring reports are in the period 17-22 May, and five are since 2004.

**Connecticut Warbler:** There were 3 reports of this rare spring migrant: singles were at FF 19 (RS) and 27 (CNK) May and in Omaha 27 May (JR).

**MacGillivray's Warbler:** The only report of this often difficult-to-locate species was from Scotts Bluff Co 26 May (AD).

**Mourning Warbler:** This species is rare away from the east; there are only 3 Panhandle records. A westerly bird was seen by several NOU members at

Valentine City Park 16-17 May 2015 (m. ob.). All reports this spring were in the period 9-25 May (m. ob.) as expected.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Arrival was rather early, with a surprising 10 at ICSP 1 May (JR) and 2 at PRSP 3 May (SSc). Early dates are 28-29 Apr.

**Common Yellowthroat:** One in Lincoln Co 24 Apr (TJW) was rather early; early dates are 20-22 Apr.

**Hooded Warbler:** Only one was reported, down from the last few years, a single in Omaha 8 May (JR).

**American Redstart:** The 40 at FF 24 May (MW) was 2nd-highest spring tally on record, behind a count of 46 in Sowbelly Canyon at the opposite end of the state.

**Cape May Warbler:** In contrast with recent springs, there was only one report, that of a "possible" at FF 14 May (RS); although the veteran observer heard the bird he was unable to see it.

**Cerulean Warbler:** Two were reported, a typical spring for this rare spring migrant: singles were at PRSP 11 May (SM) and ICSP 15 May (SSc, WRS).

**Northern Parula:** The 17 at ICSP 1 May (JR) was a good count; high counts are in the range 17-25.

**Magnolia Warbler:** Reports were routine of this uncommon eastern spring migrant, rare central.

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** None were reported of this rare eastern spring migrant.

**Blackburnian Warbler:** One was somewhat westerly in Antelope Co 23 May (GSm); this species is rare westward.

**Yellow Warbler:** The 50 at BOL 10 May (TG) was a good count; highs are 85-186.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Rare westward, there were 2 reports: 2 were at NNF, Halsey, 21 May (LE), and 1-2 were reported by the NOU group from Valentine City Park 16-17 May (m. ob.).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** Reports were routine of this fairly common eastern and central spring migrant, uncommon west.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** None were reported of this less-than-annual statewide spring migrant. One in the 2014 Spring Report in Washington Co 17 May attributed to "JJ", Jan Johnson, was an error on my part. Jan did not report the bird and I cannot track the record.

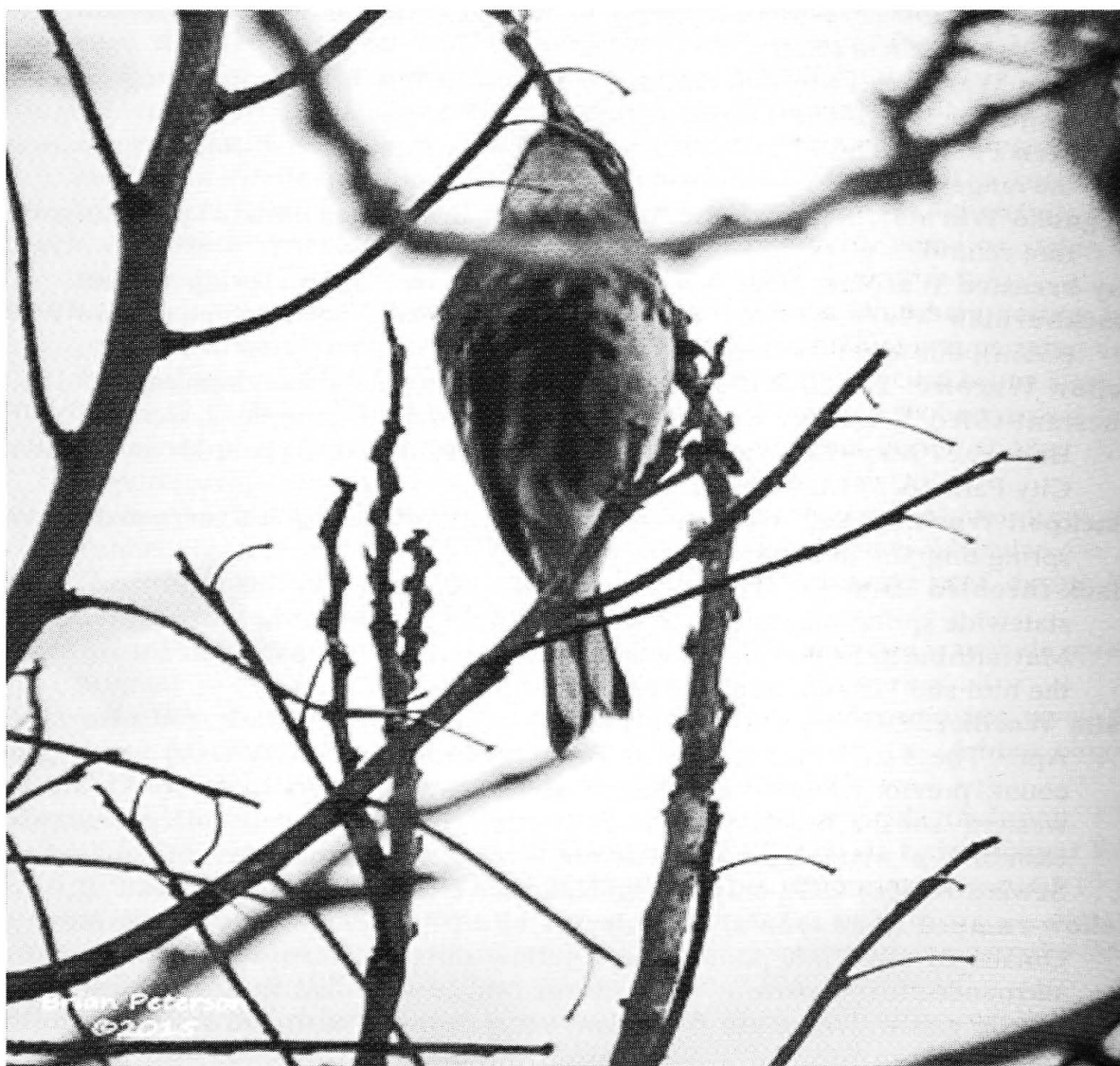
**Palm Warbler:** One in Omaha 18 Apr (BP) was rather early; early dates are 14-16 Apr. The 5 at Offutt Air Force Base L, Sarpy Co, 5 May (JCr) was a good count; previous highs were 5-26. Most Palm Warblers in Nebraska are the western subspecies *Setophaga palmarum palmarum* and intergrades with eastern *S. p. hypochrysea*. There are few records of the latter, but one was in Seward 10 May (JG), only the 7th Nebraska report of this subspecies.

**Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** A bird of the Audubon's/Myrtle group in Omaha 27 Apr (BP, photo) had a yellow throat indicative of Audubon's but surrounded by a narrow white fringe, suggesting that it had at least some Myrtle genes. There are 6 previous records in the east, and several from the central.

**Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler:** Until the last 3 winters, Feb reports were rare, indicating that over-wintering was rare. The winter of 2014-2015 added an unprecedented 16 records for Feb to the previous total of 20, and so early

reports this spring are likely over-wintering birds: 3 at Schramm SP, Sarpy Co, 1 Mar (AC), and one at GPD 6 Mar (DT). The 3 in Dawson Co 11 Mar (TJW) and one at North Platte 12 Mar (TJW) may have been rather early migrants. Early dates when over-wintering (generally mid-Feb) sightings did not occur are 9 Mar (3 records).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** One at FF 7 Apr (AG) was 3rd-earliest on record. Previous early dates were 7-10 Apr. Best count was the 6, all singing males, at FF 16 Apr (JR); there are 2 higher counts of 10 and 7, both at FF. The only reports away from FF were of one singing at ICSP 21 Apr (SSc, JC, WRS), one at NP Dodge Park, Douglas Co, 17 Apr (CNK), and 3 singing males at Krimlofsky Tract, southeast Washington Co, 1 May (MW).



This Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler, 7th record for the east, was photographed 27 Apr by Brian Peterson in Omaha.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Only 9 were reported, all in the east, 1-11 May (m. ob.), a typical total for spring migrants.

**Canada Warbler:** Only 3 were reported of this rare late spring migrant: singles were at FF 23 May (JR) and 25 May (MW), and in Omaha 25 May (JR).

**Wilson's Warbler:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide spring migrant.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** As expected, reports were from western and northern Nebraska, presumably of the western subspecies *Icteria virens auricollis*; in the north, easternmost was one in Boyd Co 29 May (LR, RH), but reports to the southeast are slowly increasing in recent years, suggesting southeastward expansion of the Nebraska population of *auricollis*. Of the 9 records of Yellow-breasted Chat in the east since 2009, 7 were in 2014 and 2015. This summer, one was in Stanton Co 21 May (WF), another in Platte Co 17 May (BP, GR), and one in Douglas Co 11 May (KGo). There are no Nebraska records cited on eBird for the eastern subspecies, *I. v. virens*, which appears to be extirpated in Nebraska.

**Green-tailed Towhee:** Only one was reported of this rare Panhandle migrant, one at WHNC 18 May (SM).

**Spotted Towhee:** Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide spring migrant.

**Eastern Towhee:** Arrival in the southeast is in early Apr, and reports this spring fit this arrival timing. Westward, however, this species is rare, but in the last few years there have been several reports from Scotts Bluff Co of phenotypically pure birds, including songs. It is interesting that these birds are reported at the same time that Spotted Towhees reappear on their Panhandle breeding range, usually about a month later than southeastern Easterns arrive. It is tempting to consider these later migration dates as evidence that these birds are genetic introgressants despite exhibiting pure Eastern Towhee phenotypes.

**Cassin's Sparrow:** None were reported of this rare and erratic southwestern summer resident; arrival is in late May.

**American Tree Sparrow:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Chipping Sparrow:** One trilling in Omaha 20 Mar (JGr) was rather early; previous early dates were 22-24 Mar.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Reports were routine of this common statewide spring migrant.

**Brewer's Sparrow:** The only report of this uncommon western sage specialist was of 2 along Henry Road, Sioux Co, 21 May (RW), an expected location.

**Field Sparrow:** This species is rare in spring in the Panhandle, with only 20 such reports; western birds are mostly of a different subspecies than those in the rest of the state. This spring, however, there were 4 Panhandle reports: in Garden Co, one was near Oshkosh 26 Apr (TFu) and 2 were at Ash Hollow SHP 16 May (KF), 4 were in Scotts Bluff Co 11 May (JCh), and one was in Sioux Co 14 May (KF). One in Johnson Co 22 Mar (JGJ) was rather early; early dates are 20 Mar (3 records).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Arrival was rather early, with singles in Lancaster Co 3 Apr (TG) and in Phelps Co 9 Apr (AF). Previous early dates were 4-9 Mar.

- Lark Sparrow:** The 120 at Ft. Robinson SRA, Dawes Co, 20 May (RW) was a good count; the only higher spring counts are 155 and 900.
- Lark Bunting:** Reports were routine of this abundant spring migrant west, uncommon north.
- Savannah Sparrow:** Rather late for the south and east were 2 in Hall Co 24 May (CCh, SPf) and one in Douglas Co 22 May (SMa). By late May most reports are from the north. Late dates are 25-29 May.
- Grasshopper Sparrow:** One in Loup Co “singing for an hour” 12 Apr (RSt) was rather early in the north; arrival in the west is about a month later than in the east (27 Apr -1 May west, 26-31 Mar east). Best count was the 50 on 30 Apr just north of North Platte (MW, KH); there are 2 higher counts, both in Hall Co, of 73 and 157.
- Henslow's Sparrow:** The only report was of 4 on 12 May at a regular location (where habitat has not been disturbed) at Burchard SRA, Pawnee Co (KF).
- Le Conte's Sparrow:** None were reported of this fairly common eastern spring migrant, uncommon central.
- Nelson's Sparrow:** The only reports of this late-migrating species were of one in Stanton Co 27 May (MB) and one at Jack Sinn 30 May (MW). Surprisingly, these are only the 11th and 12th spring records overall; this species is much easier to find in fall.
- Fox Sparrow:** The 21 at PP 30 Mar (JLL) was a good count; high counts are 22-25. Singles at BOL 1 Mar (LE), FF 2 Mar (RS), and PP 6 Mar (LE) may have wintered; there were numerous reports through winter 2014-2015 in the southeast.
- Song Sparrow:** Reports were routine of this common eastern migrant, uncommon west.
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** Reports were routine of this common eastern migrant, uncommon west.
- Swamp Sparrow:** This species generally takes up territories later than its congeners; birds were “finally” on territory near North Platte 6 May (TJW).
- White-throated Sparrow:** Rare in the west in spring, the only such report was of one at FRSHP 20 May (RW, photo).
- Harris's Sparrow:** Rare in the Panhandle, there were two reports: singles were in Kimball Co 20 May (CWo, photo), and Scotts Bluff Co 10 May (KD).
- White-crowned Sparrow:** One in Dodge Co 31 May (GR) was rather late; late dates are 31 May-3 Jun. Dark-colored birds in Nebraska that migrate through the state and occasionally winter are thought to be eastern *Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*; the Rocky Mountain breeder *Z. l. oriantha* moves south in winter and is unlikely to occur in Nebraska. A dark-colored bird in Omaha 10 May was thought “most likely an intergrade” (SMa).
- Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** None were reported of this rare western spring migrant and uncommon western summer resident.
- Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco:** Two “Dark-eyed Juncos” at Oglala National Grasslands, Sioux Co, (EJo) were likely this form, given the habitat, and rather late; late dates for this form are 2-5 Jun.



**Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco:** This form is rare in the east: the 2 reports were of one in Nebraska City 9-21 Mar (SQ) and 2 at Schramm SP, Sarpy Co, 21 Mar (RW).

**Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco:** None were reported of this common western spring migrant.

**Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco:** This form of Slate-colored Junco is regular in the east, albeit often difficult to identify; there were these reports: 1-2 were in an Omaha yard 11-15 Mar (SMa), 1-2 were at PRSP 25-26 Mar (SMa), and 2 were at Schramm SP, Sarpy Co, 21 Mar (RW).

**Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco:** This less-than-annual winter visitor was reported once this spring: one was in the Lincoln Co cedar canyons 16 Apr (LDe, photo). This is the 16th documented spring record, despite about 55 reports for the state.

**Summer Tanager:** This species has been in expansion mode in recent years, mostly in the Missouri River counties, but a pair in WP 10 May (MW) and a male there 18 May (LE) suggest expansion into Lancaster Co. Westerly but not unexpected was a fem in Keith Co 24 May (LE); there are several spring migration Panhandle reports.

**Scarlet Tanager:** There were several rather early records; previous early dates were 25-26 Apr. One in Lancaster Co 18 Apr (JSS, details) tied the 2nd-earliest date on record, singles were at PRSP 26 Apr (TJW) and on the same day at WP (JSS), and 2 were at ICSP 29 Apr (SSc). There has been only one report west of Brown Co in the Niobrara River Valley since 1959, that east of Valentine, and so one heard singing at FNNWR 17 May (TJW) was significant. There are several spring reports west to the Panhandle, but these are less-than-annual; thus of interest was one found dead after a snowstorm in Scotts Bluff Co 11 May (AD, photo).

**Western Tanager:** Reports were routine of this uncommon western spring migrant.

**Northern Cardinal:** Reports were from 2 locations in Scotts Bluff Co; the DeLara yard, where a pair was present 16 May (KD), and "across the North Platte River from the Trail's West YMCA camp" 2 May (AK). This species has been present in Scotts Bluff Co in small numbers in a few locations near the North Platte River for a few years; breeding was first noted in 1994, but the population has expanded very slowly.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** This is a regular-but-rare spring migrant as far west as the Panhandle; singles were there 23 May (AK) and 31 May (KD). Also westerly were singles at FNNWR 16 May (BP, SQ, GR) and in Custer Co 13 May (WF).

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** Hybrids and various back-crosses occur in much of central Nebraska; one such was in Howard Co 3 May (JGJ). A *Pheucticus* grosbeak in an Ogallala yard 22 Mar feeding on suet (JO, details) was likely this species; Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are not known to overwinter in Nebraska, but Black-headed Grosbeaks have wintered a few times east of their breeding range.

**Blue Grosbeak:** There was good count of 11, mostly pairs, along a few miles of road in Chat Canyon, north-central Cherry Co, 31 May 2015 (CRi).



- Lazuli Bunting:** As has become the norm in recent years, there were several reports from the east; no fewer than 11 were found 7-27 May (m. ob.). There have been 41 reported in spring in the years 2008-2015. Hybrids with Indigo Bunting are not uncommon, especially the "white-breasted Indigo" type; singles of this type were in Scotts Bluff Co 20 May (AD) and 23 May (AK).
- Indigo Bunting:** Reports were routine of this common statewide summer resident, uncommon in the Panhandle.
- Dickcissel:** Reports were routine of this common eastern summer resident, less common and more erratic westward and rare in the Panhandle.
- Bobolink:** Earliest documented record by 6 days was a male in Madison Co 16 Apr (LD); previous earliest was a banded male recaptured in Hall Co 20 Apr 2005. Previous early expected dates were 28-30 Apr, thus one in Douglas Co 27 Apr (TF) was rather early. There are also 4 undocumented reports 21-24 Apr.
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Reports were routine of this abundant statewide spring migrant.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common eastern spring migrant, uncommon and patchily-distributed westward.
- Western Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common statewide spring migrant.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide spring migrant.
- Rusty Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this uncommon eastern spring migrant, less-than-annual in the west.
- Brewer's Blackbird:** One in Dundy Co 8 Mar (WF) was early for that westerly location; farther west in the Panhandle, early spring dates are 22-31 Mar.
- Common Grackle:** The 3000 at LSWNC 13 Apr (MW) was an excellent tally, 2nd all-time only to a count of 11,222 in 2005. Strangely, the 3 highest spring counts are all in Lancaster Co.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** The 15 in Gothenburg 1 Mar (BP) were early, although wintering has occurred in North Platte, and so these birds may have wintered nearby. Non-wintering early dates are 27 Feb-1 Mar.
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** Arrival in the Panhandle is much later than in the east; early dates in the west are 9 Apr (3 records) and in the east for non-wintering birds 13-20 Feb. This spring, earliest reported in the Panhandle were 2 on 29 Apr (MW, KH). The 500 on 24 Apr in Lancaster Co (MW) was a good count; highs are 518-750.
- Orchard Oriole:** Reports were routine for this common statewide spring migrant.
- Bullock's Oriole:** Rather early was a pair in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 3 May (KD); early dates are 29 Apr-2 May. Two male hybrids were in the same Scotts Bluff Co yard 15-16 May, "typical for the yard" (KD). East of the Panhandle, reports are few; a male in Keith Co 16 May (KF) is only the 10th such on record. Six reports in the LM area are easternmost.
- Baltimore Oriole:** One in Omaha 18 Apr (JR) was rather early; early dates are 12-15 Apr.
- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch:** None were reported of this rare western winter visitor. Last dates are 20 Mar-2 Apr.

**House Finch:** A nest with 4 eggs was in Lincoln 26 Apr (TEL), and, at FF 1 May "I ... found a female House Finch sitting on an old Barn Swallow nest obviously incubating eggs. The Barn Swallows have returned and are not happy with the new tenant." (RS).

**Purple Finch:** Rare in the Panhandle, 2 were in southern Scotts Bluff Co 3 Apr (AK). Two in Red Willow Co 11 May (CLi) were rather late; last dates are 11-13 May.

**Cassin's Finch:** The good numbers reported in winter at WHNC continued, although only one remained as late as 23 May (KD photo). This is only the 2nd May record, although there are 2-3 summer records. Twenty continued in a southern Scotts Bluff Co yard until only one remained 1 Apr (AK), and 2 were in a Gering yard 19 Mar (RSg). Most surprising was an easterly male at LM 5 Apr (J&GB, photo); the 5 records east of the Panhandle are from the LM area.

**Red Crossbill:** After only one winter report, that in Lincoln Co, at least a few were at the WHNC feeders this spring, but only during 14-23 May (KD, AK), and then the best count was only 11, on 22 May (LE). Norfolk, in the east, had more: a single was at a feeder there 12 May (SB) and 20 were at the Norfolk Cem 20 May (LE). Also easterly were 4 at a Doniphan feeder 22 Mar (JLL). The only other reports were of 2 at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder 26-28 Apr (AD), 2 at Ft. Robinson SRA, Dawes Co, 17 May (SM), and some rapid transit by the latter observer found 2 in Cherry Co the same day (SM). Strangely, all but one of the above reports were in the period 26 Apr-23 May; these are probably post-breeding wanderers.

**Common Redpoll:** Continuing the low number of winter reports, there were only two reports this spring: one was at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder 2-4 Apr (KD), and 2 were at a Halsey feeder 26 Mar (fide RH).

**Pine Siskin:** Good numbers showed statewide; the 250 at WHNC 7 Mar (KD) was the highest tally reported, second on record only to 300 in Keith Co in 1982.

**Lesser Goldfinch:** Third-earliest on record was a black-backed male at LM 1 Apr (J&GB photo). This species is rapidly increasing its numbers, although almost all records are still from the Panhandle.

**American Goldfinch:** Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant and summer resident.

**Evening Grosbeak:** From the peak count of 15 wintering birds at WHNC, 9 were counted 13 Mar (AVe), and a lone fem held out until 23 May (LE, KD). This latter date is rather late; last dates are 24-29 May in the west. Elsewhere there were sightings east to Thomas Co, where 5 were at the entrance to NNF, Halsey, 14 Mar (D&JP), and Blaine Co, where 2 were at a feeder in Halsey (fide RH). The LM area hosted one at a feeder 5 Apr (J&GB) and 2 at LO 30 Apr (MW, KH, photos).

**House Sparrow:** Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

NOU Spring Field Days and Annual Meeting  
Valentine, May 15-17, 2015

by Janis Paseka

The annual meeting of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union was held in Valentine on May 15 - 17, 2015, and ably organized by Dave Heidt and Betty Grenon. Although muddy roads from a Friday night storm prevented travel to several planned field trip destinations on Saturday and rain cut short field trips on Sunday morning, the 58 attendees were able to locate and identify 180 species. Most of the birding took place in Cherry County, and many birders commented happily on the good number of species they were able to add to their Cherry Co. lists.

On Friday evening Wayne Mollhoff told the group about the Northern Saw-whet Owl nest box project he has been working on since 2012. He now has 35 nest boxes out, and two of the boxes have been used so far, both by Saw-whets and by Eastern Screech-Owls. Screech-Owls feed their young almost exclusively on birds, but Saw-whet chicks are fed a variety of prey, including mice and voles. Wayne and Jerry Toll banded Saw-whet chicks at one of the boxes this past week.

On Saturday evening, Shelly Kelly from the non-profit Sandhills Task Force spoke to the group about their attempts to sustain ranching operations while at the same time supporting native plant and animal communities. The Nebraska Sandhills region is the largest contiguous grassland in North America, encompassing more than 19,000 square miles. The Task Force projects provide financial and technical assistance to establish rotational grazing systems, restore wetlands and eradicate invasive species for the benefit of both ranch operations and wildlife.

Field trips on Saturday and on Sunday morning were led by Clem Klaphake, Wayne Mollhoff, Dave Heidt and Don and Janis Paseka. Destinations included the Niobrara River, Merritt Reservoir, Ballards Marsh WMA, Valentine City Park, Valentine State Fish Hatchery, Valentine NWR, and Ft. Niobrara NWR.

Crowd-pleasing species included the Whimbrel (Merritt Res.), American Bittern (Valentine NWR), Violet-green Swallow (fish hatchery), Lazuli Bunting (Fort Falls trail in Ft. Niobrara NWR), Mourning Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Northern Waterthrush (city park), and Yellow-Breasted Chat (canoe launch near entrance to Ft. Niobrara NWR). In all, 15 warbler and 12 sparrow species were tallied.

## NOU Annual Meeting - Valentine

|                          | Cherry | Brown | Keya Paha |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| Canada Goose             | x      | x     | x         |
| Trumpeter Swan           | x      |       |           |
| Wood Duck                | x      |       |           |
| Gadwall                  | x      |       |           |
| American Wigeon          | x      |       |           |
| Mallard                  | x      |       |           |
| Blue-winged Teal         | x      | x     |           |
| Northern Shoveler        | x      |       |           |
| Northern Pintail         | x      |       |           |
| Green-winged Teal        | x      |       |           |
| Canvasback               | x      |       |           |
| Redhead                  | x      |       |           |
| Ring-necked Duck         | x      | x     |           |
| Lesser Scaup             | x      |       |           |
| Bufflehead               | x      |       |           |
| Ruddy Duck               | x      |       |           |
| Northern Bobwhite        | x      |       |           |
| Gray Partridge           | x      |       |           |
| Ring-necked Pheasant     | x      |       |           |
| Sharp-tailed Grouse      | x      | x     |           |
| Greater Prairie-Chicken  | x      |       |           |
| Wild Turkey              | x      | x     | x         |
| Pied-billed Grebe        | x      |       |           |
| Horned Grebe             | x      |       |           |
| Eared Grebe              | x      |       |           |
| Western Grebe            | x      |       |           |
| Clark's Grebe            | x      |       |           |
| Double-crested Cormorant | x      |       |           |
| American White Pelican   | x      |       |           |

## NOU Annual Meeting - Valentine

|                      | Cherry | Brown | Keya Paha |
|----------------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| American Bittern     | x      |       |           |
| Great Blue Heron     | x      | x     |           |
| Great Egret          | x      |       |           |
| Cattle Egret         | x      |       |           |
| Glossy Ibis          | x      |       |           |
| White-faced Ibis     | x      |       |           |
| Turkey Vulture       | x      | x     | x         |
| Bald Eagle           | x      | x     |           |
| Northern Harrier     | x      |       |           |
| Cooper's Hawk        | x      |       |           |
| Swainson's Hawk      | x      |       |           |
| Red-tailed Hawk      | x      | x     | x         |
| Virginia Rail        | x      |       |           |
| Sora                 | x      |       |           |
| American Coot        | x      |       |           |
| American Avocet      | x      |       |           |
| Black-bellied Plover | x      |       |           |
| Killdeer             | x      | x     | x         |
| Spotted Sandpiper    | x      |       |           |
| Greater Yellowlegs   | x      |       |           |
| Willet               | x      | x     |           |
| Lesser Yellowlegs    | x      |       |           |
| Upland Sandpiper     | x      |       | x         |
| Whimbrel             | x      |       |           |
| Long-billed Curlew   | x      | x     |           |
| Marbled Godwit       | x      |       |           |
| Stilt Sandpiper      | x      |       |           |
| Sanderling           | x      |       |           |
| Baird's Sandpiper    | x      |       |           |
| Least Sandpiper      | x      |       |           |

## NOU Annual Meeting - Valentine

|                           | Cherry | Brown | Keya Paha |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| White-rumped Sandpiper    | x      |       |           |
| Pectoral Sandpiper        | x      |       |           |
| Semipalmated Sandpiper    | x      |       |           |
| Long-billed Dowitcher     | x      |       |           |
| Wilson's Snipe            | x      |       |           |
| American Woodcock         | x      |       |           |
| Wilson's Phalarope        | x      | x     |           |
| Bonaparte's Gull          | x      |       |           |
| Franklin's Gull           | x      |       |           |
| Ring-billed Gull          | x      | x     |           |
| Black Tern                | x      | x     |           |
| Forster's Tern            | x      | x     |           |
| Rock Pigeon               | x      |       |           |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove    | x      | x     |           |
| Mourning Dove             | x      | x     | x         |
| Eastern Screech-Owl       | x      |       |           |
| Great Horned Owl          | x      |       |           |
| Common Nighthawk          |        |       | x         |
| Chimney Swift             | x      |       |           |
| Ruby-throated Hummingbird | x      |       |           |
| Belted Kingfisher         | x      |       |           |
| Red-headed Woodpecker     | x      | x     |           |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker    | x      |       |           |
| Downy Woodpecker          | x      |       |           |
| Hairy Woodpecker          | x      |       |           |
| Northern Flicker          | x      | x     | x         |
| American Kestrel          | x      | x     |           |
| Western Wood-Pewee        | x      |       |           |
| Eastern Wood-Pewee        | x      |       |           |
| Alder Flycatcher          | x      |       |           |

## NOU Annual Meeting - Valentine

|                               | Cherry | Brown | Keya Paha |
|-------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| Willow Flycatcher             | x      |       |           |
| Least Flycatcher              | x      |       |           |
| Eastern Phoebe                | x      | x     |           |
| Great Crested Flycatcher      | x      | x     | x         |
| Western Kingbird              | x      | x     | x         |
| Eastern Kingbird              | x      | x     | x         |
| Loggerhead Shrike             | x      |       |           |
| Bell's Vireo                  | x      |       |           |
| Warbling Vireo                | x      |       |           |
| Red-eyed Vireo                | x      | x     |           |
| Blue Jay                      | x      |       | x         |
| American Crow                 | x      | x     | x         |
| Horned Lark                   | x      | x     | x         |
| Purple Martin                 | x      |       |           |
| Tree Swallow                  | x      | x     | x         |
| Violet-Green Swallow          | x      |       |           |
| Northern Rough-winged Swallow | x      | x     | x         |
| Bank Swallow                  | x      |       |           |
| Cliff Swallow                 | x      | x     | x         |
| Barn Swallow                  | x      | x     | x         |
| Black-capped Chickadee        | x      |       | x         |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch         | x      |       | x         |
| White-breasted Nuthatch       | x      | x     |           |
| Brown Creeper                 | x      |       |           |
| Rock Wren                     | x      |       |           |
| House Wren                    | x      | x     | x         |
| Marsh Wren                    | x      |       |           |
| Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher         | x      |       |           |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet          | x      |       |           |
| Eastern Bluebird              | x      |       |           |

## NOU Annual Meeting - Valentine

|                            | Cherry | Brown | Keya Paha |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| Swainson's Thrush          | x      |       |           |
| American Robin             | x      | x     | x         |
| Gray Catbird               | x      | x     |           |
| Northern Mockingbird       | x      |       |           |
| Brown Thrasher             | x      | x     | x         |
| European Starling          | x      |       |           |
| Sprague's Pipit            | x      |       |           |
| Cedar Waxwing              | x      | x     | x         |
| Chestnut-collared Longspur |        |       | x         |
| Ovenbird                   | x      | x     | x         |
| Northern Waterthrush       | x      |       |           |
| Black-and-white Warbler    | x      |       | x         |
| Tennessee Warbler          | x      | x     |           |
| Orange-crowned Warbler     | x      |       |           |
| Nashville Warbler          | x      |       |           |
| Mourning Warbler           | x      |       |           |
| Common Yellowthroat        | x      | x     | x         |
| American Redstart          | x      | x     | x         |
| Yellow Warbler             | x      | x     | x         |
| Chestnut-sided Warbler     | x      |       |           |
| Blackpoll Warbler          | x      |       |           |
| Yellow-rumped Warbler      | x      | x     |           |
| Wilson's Warbler           | x      |       |           |
| Yellow-breasted Chat       | x      | x     | x         |
| Spotted Towhee             | x      | x     | x         |
| Chipping Sparrow           | x      | x     | x         |
| Clay-colored Sparrow       | x      | x     |           |
| Field Sparrow              | x      | x     | x         |
| Vesper Sparrow             | x      |       |           |
| Lark Sparrow               | x      | x     | x         |



|                                |                          |       |               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|---------------|
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| NOU Annual Meeting - Valentine |                          |       |               |
|                                | Cherry                   | Brown | Keya Paha     |
| Lark Bunting                   | x                        |       | x             |
| Savannah Sparrow               |                          | x     |               |
| Grasshopper Sparrow            | x                        |       |               |
| Song Sparrow                   | x                        |       |               |
| Lincoln's Sparrow              | x                        |       |               |
| Swamp Sparrow                  | x                        |       |               |
| White-throated Sparrow         | x                        |       |               |
| White-crowned Sparrow          | x                        |       |               |
| Scarlet Tanager                | x                        |       |               |
| Northern Cardinal              | x                        | x     | x             |
| Rose-breasted Grosbeak         | x                        |       |               |
| Black-headed Grosbeak          | x                        |       |               |
| Blue Grosbeak                  | x                        |       |               |
| Lazuli Bunting                 | x                        |       |               |
| Indigo Bunting                 | x                        | x     |               |
| Dickcissel                     | x                        |       |               |
| Bobolink                       | x                        | x     |               |
| Red-winged Blackbird           | x                        | x     | x             |
| Eastern Meadowlark             | x                        |       |               |
| Western Meadowlark             | x                        | x     | x             |
| Yellow-headed Blackbird        | x                        | x     |               |
| Common Grackle                 | x                        | x     | x             |
| Great-tailed Grackle           | x                        |       |               |
| Brown-headed Cowbird           | x                        | x     | x             |
| Orchard Oriole                 | x                        | x     |               |
| Baltimore Oriole               | x                        | x     |               |
| House Finch                    | x                        |       |               |
| Red Crossbill                  | x                        |       |               |
| Pine Siskin                    | x                        |       |               |
| American Goldfinch             | x                        | x     | x             |
| House Sparrow                  | x                        | x     |               |
| Total species:                 | 180                      | 177   | 63            |
|                                |                          |       | 43            |

## Oriole Consumption of Grape Jelly

Gary Lingle  
45320 Kilgore Road  
Gibbon NE 68840

It is well known that several species of orioles are attracted to grape (*Vitis* sp.) jelly. A few years ago I began “feeding” grape jelly to orioles in my yard in Buffalo County (Figure 1). Both Baltimore Orioles (*Icterus galbula*) and, to a lesser extent, Orchard Orioles (*Icterus spurius*) frequented my feeder upon their arrival in early May and fed daily until the red mulberries (*Morus rubra*) ripened and nesting had commenced prior to mid-June. At that time visitation to my feeder plummeted from a high of 1.5 birds per minute to 0.1 birds per minute. During peak use of my feeder, orioles consumed up to two pounds of grape jelly per day even though the most seen at one time was 7 individuals. Other people within a 10-mile radius of my yard had similar consumption rates, which raised the question of how many orioles it takes to consume two pounds of jelly per day. This paper addresses that question.



Figure 1. Oriole feeding station in my yard.

### Study Area

My yard is located on Drover Island along the Platte River about 2 miles southwest of the Gibbon I-80 Exit #285 (Figure 2). It is about 1.5 acres of buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) lawn that contains twelve small fruit trees about 6 feet in height adjacent to wooded accretion land along the north channel of the Platte River.



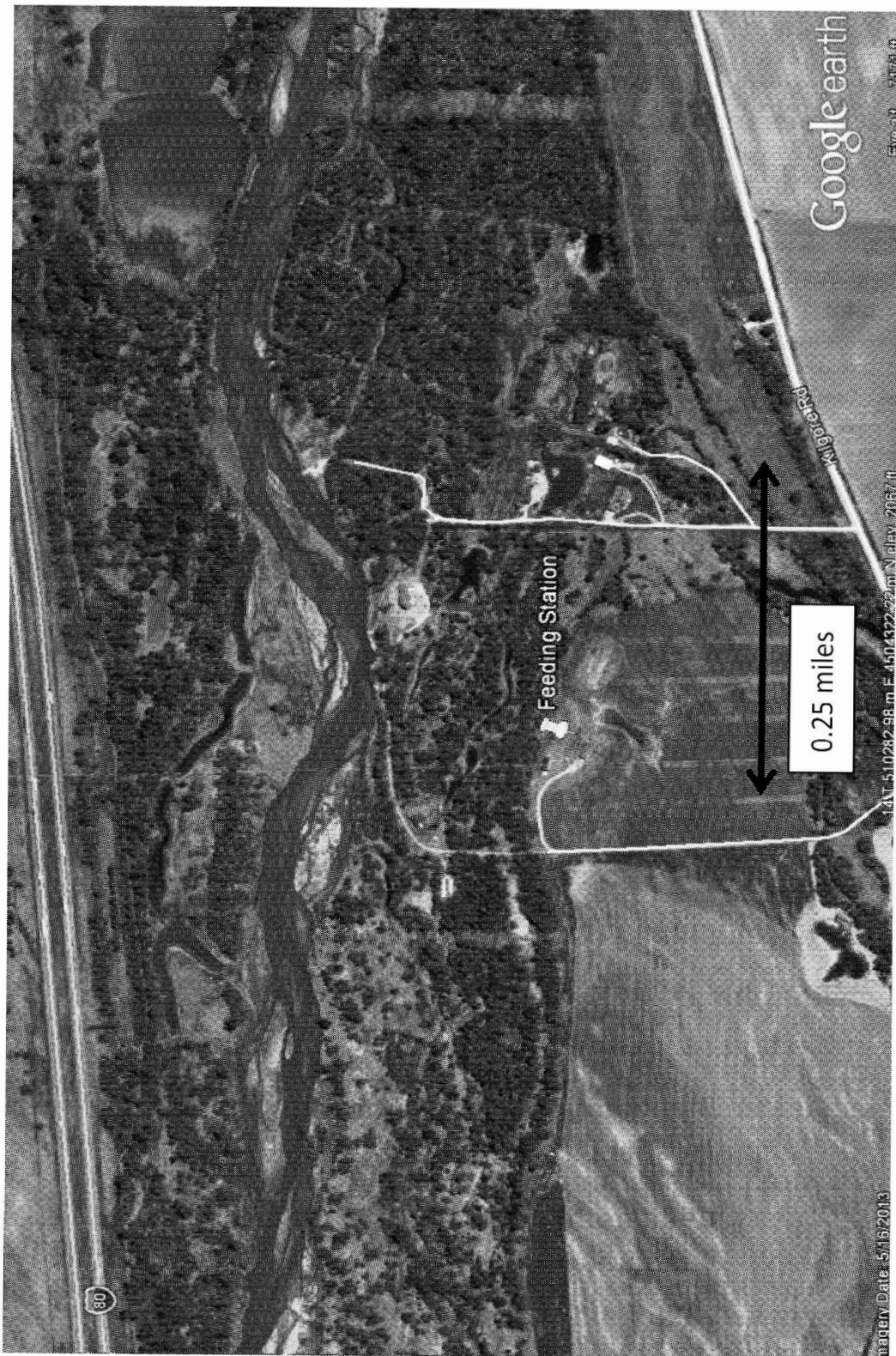


Figure 2. Aerial view of the study area.

The wooded area is typical Platte River riparian forest that consists primarily of plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), red mulberry, hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), and American elm (*Ulmus americana*). The feeder is situated between two peach trees (*Prunus persica*) about 45 yards south of the forest edge.

#### Methods

In 2014, in order to obtain an accurate count, I placed a 12 meter mist net near my feeder and banded individuals using standard aluminum bands issued by the Bird Banding Laboratory. I banded a sample of orioles and then counted both the banded and unbanded birds visiting my feeder during 30 minute intervals on 12 occasions between June 2 -12. Assuming the probability of observing a banded individual was equal to the probability of observing an unbanded individual, I was able to estimate the total number of unbanded orioles based on the following relationship:  $\frac{x_1}{x_2} = \frac{y_1}{y_2}$

where  $x_1$  = number of banded orioles observed at the feeder;  
 $x_2$  = actual number banded;  
 $y_1$  = number of unbanded orioles observed at the feeder;  
 $y_2$  = total number of unbanded birds.

Because I knew the values for  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ , and  $y_1$ , by solving the above equation for  $y_2$  ( $y_2 = (x_2 \cdot y_1)/x_1$ ), I was able to estimate the total number of unbanded orioles ( $y_2$ ). The total number of orioles was then estimated by adding the number of orioles banded ( $x_2$ ) and the estimate of the total unbanded orioles ( $y_2$ ). The total number of orioles ( $N$ ) =  $x_2 + y_2$ .

In 2015, a more intensive banding effort was made in an attempt to band every individual and get a total count of orioles visiting my feeder. The extrapolation method of estimating the population was not used because the number of previously banded individuals returning from 2014 was unknown.

#### Results

In 2014 I captured and banded orioles at my feeder on 3 mornings between June 2-8 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of orioles banded in 2014.

|                   | Males | Females | Total |
|-------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Baltimore Orioles | 41    | 38      | 79    |
| Orchard Orioles   | 14    | 8       | 22    |
| Total             | 55    | 46      | 101   |

| Date   | Time        | #  | Baltimore Orioles |          |           |          | # | Orchard Orioles |           |        |          |
|--------|-------------|----|-------------------|----------|-----------|----------|---|-----------------|-----------|--------|----------|
|        |             |    | Observed          | Observed | Estimated | Observed |   | Observed        | Estimated |        |          |
|        |             |    | Banded            | Banded   | Unbanded  |          |   |                 |           | Banded | Unbanded |
| 2-Jun  | 9:30-10:00  | 62 | 24                | 15       | 101       | 14       | 7 | 2               | 18        | 119    |          |
|        | 10:00-10:30 | 62 | 13                | 17       | 143       | 14       | 6 | 0               | 14        | 157    |          |
|        | 11:45-12:15 | 62 | 20                | 12       | 99        | 14       | 3 | 3               | 28        | 127    |          |
| 4-Jun  | 8:15-8:45   | 62 | 24                | 17       | 106       | 14       | 5 | 3               | 22        | 128    |          |
| 9-Jun  | 6:38-7:08   | 79 | 8                 | 4        | 119       | 22       | 5 | 1               | 26        | 145    |          |
| 10-Jun | 7:40-8:10   | 79 | 12                | 1        | 86        | 22       | 5 | 3               | 35        | 121    |          |
|        | 8:10-8:40   | 79 | 11                | 3        | 101       | 22       | 4 | 1               | 28        | 129    |          |
|        | 8:40-9:10   | 79 | 9                 | 0        | 79        | 22       | 7 | 2               | 28        | 107    |          |
|        | 9:10-9:40   | 79 | 13                | 2        | 91        | 22       | 7 | 2               | 28        | 119    |          |
| 11-Jun | 7:10-7:40   | 79 | 9                 | 3        | 105       | 22       | 3 | 2               | 37        | 142    |          |
|        | 7:40-8:10   | 79 | 1                 | 0        | 79        | 22       | 3 | 1               | 29        | 108    |          |
| 12-Jun | 6:50-7:20   | 79 | 2                 | 0        | 79        | 22       | 2 | 0               | 22        | 101    |          |

I then counted the number of banded and unbanded orioles during twelve 30-minute periods on 6 days (Table 2). By extrapolating the number of banded individuals vs unbanded individuals at my feeder and then adding the highest numbers of each species, I estimated a maximum of 180 orioles at my feeder.

In 2015 I captured and banded orioles at my feeder on 10 mornings between May 14 and June 5 (Table 3). A total of 205 individual orioles was handled. The population was greater than 205 since a few unbanded birds were observed after banding ceased.

Table 3. Number of orioles banded in 2015 and recaptured from 2014

|                          | Males  |            | Females |            | Total |
|--------------------------|--------|------------|---------|------------|-------|
|                          | Banded | Recaptures | Banded  | Recaptures |       |
| <b>Baltimore orioles</b> | 77     | 15         | 63      | 9          | 164   |
| <b>Orchard Orioles</b>   | 25     | 2          | 14      | 0          | 41    |
| <b>Total</b>             | 102    | 17         | 77      | 9          | 205   |

### Discussion

The number of orioles visiting my feeder was surprising given that only a maximum of 7 individuals was observed at one time. Prior to this study, I thought I was being generous in estimating that there might be 10 times the number of orioles in the area than seen at my feeder at any one time ( $10 \times 7 = 70$  individuals). Based on these findings, I had grossly underestimated the actual numbers. Assuming the population of orioles was the same each year, the extrapolation method used in 2014 accounted for 87% of the Baltimore Orioles and 90% of the Orchard Orioles handled in 2015.

A number of questions come to mind as a result of this study and form the basis for future research. Are these resident or passage individuals? How large an area does this population occupy? Is there a similar number of individuals using other feeders in the area? I intend to expand banding efforts next year to address the last question given that there were no banded individuals seen at those feeders. Who knows what other surprises these colorful neotropical migrants may provide?

### Acknowledgements

I thank Thomas Labedz, Janis Paseka, and Joe Gubanyi for reviewing this manuscript and the Bird Banding Laboratory for enabling me to band birds.

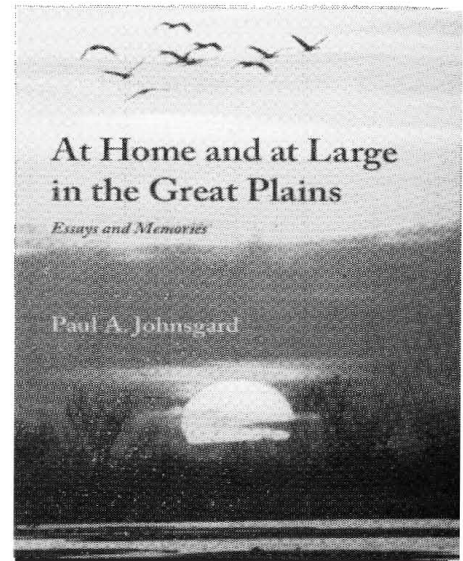


*At Home and at Large in the Great Plains Essays and Memories*

Paul A. Johnsgard

Reviewed by Janis Paseka

Nebraska birders may remember reading some of the 14 essays published in this book, since they appeared previously in *Prairie Fire*, the monthly Great Plains public policy newspaper. Topics of the short and engaging essays range from changing bird life to outstanding birding areas to conservation in the Great Plains. We read about sediment deposits, the “gifts of glaciers past”, which were left by retreating rivers of ice thousands of years ago and resulted in the creation of the prairie potholes so important now to our waterfowl and wading birds. One essay marvels at the variety of animal skeletons, including a saber-toothed deer, found at Ashfall Fossil Beds. Another chronicles the author’s observations of the hatching of a chick of the greater race of Sandhill Cranes which breed in the mountain meadows of far western Wyoming. Johnsgard describes the new crane as “a beautiful coppery-gold chick, as shiny as a newly minted penny”.



Also included is an informal autobiography, an earlier version of which appeared in 2010 in the *Nebraska Bird Review*. We read about his childhood along the Red River in North Dakota, his research at Cornell University and the Wildfowl Trust in England, and his acceptance in 1961 of a teaching position at the University of Nebraska, described by his mentor as “not a bad place from which to look for another job”. But Johnsgard “fell in love with Nebraska from the very beginning” and stayed. He describes being reluctantly nudged into teaching a summer ornithology class at the University of Nebraska’s Cedar Point Biological Station just east of Lake McConaughy. He had never been there before and considered a temporary relocation to western Nebraska as an unwelcome interruption to his planned summer writing. When he arrived and drove down into the junipers and cottonwoods surrounding the facility, however, he heard Rock Wrens and Black-billed Magpies, and a Great-Horned Owl took off before him from a rocky promontory. He felt like he “had suddenly been transported to a magical place”. He went back to teach there for 16 of the following 17 summers, and his writing did not suffer, as he is the author of more than 80 books and many more articles. A list of all his published works appears at the end of the book.

The book is available from Zea Books, Lincoln NE, and in electronic form on <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/zeabook/30/>.

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